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# First Grade Fairy Tale thematic Unit: Improving Writing

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FIRST GRADE FAIRY TALE THEMATIC UNIT

IMPROVING WRITING

by

Chelsi Gross

A Research Project Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Education

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## ABSTRACT

### First Grade Fairy Tale Thematic Unit Improving Writing

This project integrated writing and literature to better teach first grade students how to write. The thematic unit utilizes a variety of learning styles and ties varying schools of thought together into one succinct unit through 14 lessons, one being a celebration. Each lesson is designed to incorporate Colorado State Writing Standards, Step Up to Writing, 6 Trait Writing, and the Writing Process. Upon review, this project was found to be well laid out, successful in addressing a range of learning styles, and easy to implement. However, the project may be at times too difficult for struggling writers and may require minimization of steps and more time. Overall this unit's successes are best established by implementation.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

The use of literature to support writing within the classroom has been part of many educators' discussions on how to effectively teach children to write. In this author's current teaching position, as a first grade teacher in the Poudre School District, there is an emphasis on writing as an area of improvement; specifically, the *how* to teach writing, the effective schools of thought, what first grade students can produce, and why it is important for them to write. At the primary levels, effective writing works well in combination with text-picture books. According to the Dean and Grierson (2005) study, once children understand declarative knowledge, and the formation and importance of text (e.g., picture books, novels, etc.), they are able to distinguish the purpose of their own writing. According to Calkins (2003), if educators do not plan a writing curriculum with the use of ongoing structures (e.g., minilessons, conferences, writing folders, work time, partnerships) and changing units (e.g., folk tales, fairy tales, personal narrative), the students will not be effective writers.

#### Statement of Problem

Currently, in the Poudre School District, there is no established writing curriculum for first grade. There are a variety of training opportunities for teachers to attend in order to become better instructors of writing (e.g., Step Up To Writing and Barbara Mariconda Writers' Workshop), and teachers are required to participate in at least one of them. However, even with training, limited as it is, the *how* to teach writing

is still a struggle for most teachers. As seen in the Martin, Segraves, Thacker, and Young (2005) and in the Hoewisch (2001) studies, the lack of teachers' proper training in how to teach writing will negatively affect students' motivation, desire, success, and overall interest in writing.

Also, there is a paucity of knowledge about the writing process in primary grades, and how it can be utilized within the classroom. There is a strong push within the Poudre School District to increase students' Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP; Colorado Department of Education, 1997) scores in writing, starting in primary grades. However, educators need more support and guidance about how to properly teach these primary grade students how to write. Specifically, instructors need to be able to teach students how to write effectively, while they provide an environment of excitement and interest which, in turn, motivates students to write better and to write more. However, the provision of isolated writing instruction alone will not assist students to make the required academic connections between what they read, what they write, and its effect in their world. It is important to integrate writing instruction and the writing process through the use of literature. In that way, students can see the benefit of writing in all subject areas.

#### Purpose of Project

The purpose of this project will be to develop a thematic unit on fairy tales that will be used to improve student success in writing in the first grade. The project will be based on a variety of pieces of literature to support writing through the writing process. Also, this project will be shared with this author's colleagues during a team collaboration session.



## Chapter Summary

It is this author's position that the writing process must be taught in association with literature. This will be accomplished by the development of a thematic unit on folktales, and this literature will be used to support students' writing. Along with a unit, it is important for educators to choose a specific school of thought that is appropriate to the specific environment of their classroom. From there, they must apply its rules and maintain use of it daily. In Chapter 2, the Review of Literature, this author will provide background information about the importance of writing and how current schools of thought meet the needs. Also, this author will demonstrate the best way to support the writing development and process for primary students. In Chapter 3, Method, the steps for how to effectively develop a thematic unit on literature linked to writing instruction will be detailed.

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this project will be to develop a thematic writing unit, based on the use of folktales that can be applied in a primary grade classroom. Writing is an important component of a classroom environment. Students begin to learn how to translate the sounds of the English language into written letters in Kindergarten. Once students enter first grade, they should be able to recognize and say the English alphabet as well as write it. In first grade, students are taught phonics and phonemic awareness with the use of programs such as The Open Court Curriculum (SRA, 2002). Students are taught the basics of language on a daily basis. In first grade classrooms, students start to write letters and basic sounds to form sentences within the first few months of school. On a daily basis, 30-40 minutes is spent on writing. Daily writing practice is important for students to familiarize themselves with the components of effective writing. However, daily writing without structure, planning, support, and the use of literature will negatively affect students in their comprehension of the writing process. Many factors are involved in the development of a solid writing curriculum, and all should be further investigated.

#### Why There Is Pressure for Students to Write

It is important for first grade students to know how to adequately write for a variety of reasons (Miles, Stegle, Hubbs, Henk, & Mallette, 2004). Writing in first grade provides exposure for students to become familiar with writing and the writing process.

Along with this exposure, students build the proper scaffolding to become stronger writers. As stronger writers, students are better prepared for the intermediate grades and the writing requirements of those grades. More specifically, stronger writing prepares students, when they reach intermediate grades, to perform better on standardized state tests like the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP; CDE, 1997). This notion reinforces the idea that the success of elementary faculty is largely measured by literacy (e.g., reading and writing) scores (Miles, Stegle, Hubbs, Henk, & Mallette, 2004).

The ideas of school success are based on recent educational reform movements, specifically, national and state standards, which dictate student achievement (Isaacson, 2004). These educational reforms have placed an emphasis on public accountability. Due to accountability, standards have been linked to statewide assessments of student performance (e.g., CSAP; CDE, 1997). However, there are still times when standards and assessments do not always align. Then, individual teachers are responsible to make sure that their individual lessons align with standards.

According to Isaacson (2004), there are two types of standards. The first is *Content* standards, which describe, in general terms, what students should know and be able to do (e.g., all students will write in clear, concise, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes). *Performance* standards describe more explicitly what students need to be able to demonstrate (e.g., students produce reports that engage readers by establishing context, persona, and reader interest). *Benchmarks* are the measurable milestones that students meet along the way, while they fulfill content and performance standards. Often, benchmarks in schools are represented by end of the school year goals and rubrics.

The focus on writing in student achievement is a new factor in educational reform (Isaacson, 2004). Members of the National Council for Teachers of English (2002) and the International Reading Association (2002, both cited in Isaacson) established the national performance based standards for the English language which are: (a) students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (i.e., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and purposes; (b) students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing elements to communicate for a variety of purposes; and (c) students apply knowledge of language structure, conventions (i.e., spelling and punctuation), media, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.

Standards in writing may vary slightly from state to state in their specificity (Isaacson, 2004). Established standards, such as Colorado, reflect the writing process and include terms like: (a) prewrite, (b) write, (c) postwrite, (d) plan, (e) draft, (f) revise, and (g) edit. Also, there is a focus on the conventions that are related to: (a) spelling, (b) punctuation, and (c) grammar. The types/genres of writing forms, typically addressed by state standards are: (a) personal narrative, (b) imaginative narrative, (c) expository writing, (d) persuasive essays, and (e) reports.

The use of standards can have both positive and negative effects on the staff of a school and its district (Isaacson, 2004). School district and school administrators as well as teachers are held accountable for what they teach and how they teach it. However, rigid criteria may form, and then teaching becomes centered on standardized tests. Standardized tests do not always accommodate nor address diverse populations nor do the results demonstrate students' true abilities.

## What Primary Students Can and Cannot Accomplish with Writing

First grade students are able to learn and apply the rules of the English language within their reading and writing (Calkins, 1986). Most are able to accomplish the goals and requirements of all subjects (i.e., reading, writing, and mathematics) by continuous and repeated practice of them. Also, many students are able to unknowingly manipulate their minds and motor skills in ways an average adult would need to spend hours to accomplish (e.g., mirror image writing). They have a sensitive manner and understand the world in simple, uncomplicated terms. Their natural curiosity drives them to explore and connect to the environment around them.

It is not uncommon to see first grade students learn to multiply, write 2-3 page stories, and count back change, all intermixed with their literal personalities (Calkins, 2003). However, some first grade students fall behind in reading, do not understand mathematical concepts, and fail to understand the steps of writing. This is why it is important for educators to be prepared to address and teach all types of students, those who learn easily as well as those who struggle. With a solid established writing curriculum, based on lessons tailored to meet students' varying learning styles, all students can be successful at writing, whatever their skills. An educator can determine students' writing skills in a variety of ways and utilize multiple approaches through the use of effective writing lessons.

### *Brain Based Learning*

According to Mish (2003), the brain is the portion of the central nervous system that is enclosed in the skull and composed of neurons. It supports and has structures that: (a) integrate sensory information from inside and outside the body, (b) control autonomic

function, (c) coordinate and direct motor responses, and (d) process learning. In regard to brain based learning, the physical brain is the major component; however, this theory involves a minor component as well, the mind. The mind is the element or elements involved in what an individual: (a) feels, (b) perceives, (c) thinks, (d) wills, and (e) reasons (Mish, 2003). In order to understand brain based learning, one should view the mind and brain as intertwined and connected.

The brain is a phenomenal organ. Roberts (2002) found that: (a) the brain is neuroplastic, and changes physiologically based on experiences; (b) the brain is complex and interconnected, there are no isolated, specialized areas in the brain, instead the brain processes information simultaneously with a wide variety of information; and (c) every brain is unique, each individuals' brain is has its own physiology, neural wiring, biochemical balance, and developmental stages.

Roberts (2002) and Caine and Caine (1990) made similar recommendations for educators to effectively apply brain based learning within their own classroom.

1. Pattern and Meaning Making, meaning occurs through patterning, meaningful organization, and categorization of information. Educators assist students to make patterns with an emphasis on context, in order to frame learner involvement within the taught material. Educators alternate between details and global picture, and relevancy (i.e., educators chunk information and create a big picture to which students can refer back to).
2. The Brain as a Parallel Processor, the brain is a multitasking machine, highly efficient in doing many things at once. The brain learns best through rich, complex, and multisensory environments. An educator

is an *orchestrator* of learning environments. In order to assist student achievement, an educator uses multimodal instructional techniques (e.g., visual, kinesthetic, and auditory). An enriched learning environment will incorporate the following: (a) challenge, (b) novelty, (c) choice, (d) high feedback, (e) social interaction, and (f) active participation.

3. Stress and Threat: learning is enhanced by challenge and inhibited by threat. Students need to *shift up* in their learning. Learning outcomes should be relatively open ended so that students can discover personal meaning and intrinsic motivation through manageable and open time lines. If this does not occur, students feel restricted and punished, personal meaning will be limited, and they will feel little support in the unknown area they are learning. Teachers should apply the 60/40 rule when planning lessons. Ritual based learning, activities that are repetitive (e.g., morning check in, skill progression, warm-ups, post-activity debriefing) should be 60% of a lesson taught. The remaining portion of a lesson, 40%, should include suspense and surprise (e.g., “rhombus up” instead of “circle up,” group shares, silent journaling, partner writing, and acted out learned skills).
4. Learning involves focused and peripheral attention, the brain absorbs information directly and indirectly. A teacher must understand that what is on the walls of his or her classroom will affect student learning.

According to Caine and Caine (1990), active processing should always be a component of a successful brain based classroom, as when students take charge in the

consolidation and internalization of learning in a personal way (e.g., keeping journals). Students in a classroom should be involved in: (a) decision making, (b) classroom jobs, and (c) mediation. Students should be given the opportunity to be a part of the classroom, not just a function of the classroom.

### *Nonfiction Writing*

Nonfiction writing has three forms: (a) procedural writing, (b) informational writing, and (c) idea based writing (Calkins, 2003). Nonfiction writing is the most common genre used to assess students' writing abilities on standardized tests. In times past, most student exposure to informational writing did not occur until Grades 3 or 4. This lack of exposure to nonfiction writing poses a challenge to most students. Students, who are unfamiliar with the difficult concepts of nonfiction texts and topics, struggle with writing long reports, and as a result, standardized test scores drop.

Currently, school performance is reflected through student scores on standardized tests, and teacher accountability to these scores has trickled down to the primary grades (Scully & Roberts, 2002). Primary grade teachers are responsible to expose students to nonfiction writing. Due to this reality, nonfiction writing is crucial for students to communicate the truths of their world (Calkins, 2003). Students need time to scaffold learned information and practice writing skills. It is important for teachers to demonstrate nonfiction writing to primary students and provide time to practice and develop the skills needed to successfully write in this genre.

Procedural knowledge is tightly sequenced and detailed (Calkins, 2003). Often, it is referred to as expository form. It provides directions for students to follow when they write. It starts with a beginning, proceeds step by step to support the text, and then



finishes with a conclusion. Use of this form of writing assists students to establish their point of view. Also, it helps students to write with: (a) clarity, (b) sequence, (c) explicit detail, and (d) audience awareness. Use of these factors help to shape and create strong writers.

### *Narrative Writing*

The use of expository writing is an appropriate writing form for responses to test questions and research reports but, for creative ideas, voice, and exciting stories, narrative writing is better suited to meet students' personalities and styles. Narrative writing, or storytelling, is vital to a students' literacy development (Calkins, 2003). The use of narrative writing allows students to write about things that pertain to their own interests and experiences. Ideas for narrative writing can come directly from students' understanding and enjoyment of stories and the personal connections they make with them. The goal is to teach students how to sequence their favorite stories in explicit detail and to use these details in such a way that any reader could follow the events (Calkins). It is because of these factors, according to Moore and Cladwell (1993), that students can write easily and at greater lengths.

Students can become more comfortable with narrative writing as teachers instruct them on story elements. When students are trained to be familiar with story structure and story elements, they produce higher quality stories (Moore & Caldwell, 1993). Educators should focus narrative writing lessons on elements such as: (a) plot, (b) characterization, and (c) setting. Once students have grasped the idea of these elements, they are better prepared to create their own narrative stories, both personal and otherwise. It is strongly suggested that narrative writing be taught in conjunction with: (a) drawings, (b) gestures,

(c) talking, and (d) storytelling. The use of these elements help students, especially primary students, to provide personal connections and meaning to what they write.

### Writing Schools of Thought

As an educator, often it is hard to know where to start in order to develop writing units and individual lessons. Questions come to mind, such as, when is the best time to introduce conventions (e.g., spelling, grammar, punctuation) or when should nonfiction and narrative writing should be taught? In order for teachers to be successful in teaching writing, they must look at and understand the established writing schools of thought. Major proponents of the writing field have helped to create the current writing theories, ideas, and frameworks. The dilemma of these schools of thought is that, frequently, they are focused on intermediate and secondary students (e.g., Grades 4-12); there are a few schools of thoughts that are applicable to the primary grades.

### *Paucity of Studies on Writers' Workshop*

Writers' Workshop is a period of time each school day in which children read and write (Baker, 1994). Students may work together as a class or in small groups or pairs. To begin a Writers' Workshop, often, teachers read a story aloud and follow it with a discussion about its particular story element or elements. Most stories read aloud are student created. Usually, the stories have a specific purpose; typically, they are given to students by the teacher at the beginning of the day (e.g., the use of many adjectives). The corresponding lessons are focused on the process of writing and how each student moves through the process at varying steps and levels. At the beginning of the school year, teachers publish many of their student's stories, in order to help students establish

intrinsic value in their writing. As the year progresses, students choose the stories to be published, which exemplify their best work.

Frequently, Writers' Workshop is difficult to implement within a primary classroom for multiple reasons, and information to assist primary grade teachers in this process are limited. This is mostly due to the fact that primary level students need constant guidance and support through the writing process (Baker, 1994). Skills that have become almost second nature by the time students reach the intermediate grades, or most educators hope they have, are in their early formative stages in primary grades. Primary grade students, especially in first grade, have just learned all of their letters and corresponding sounds; to string those letters together to make words is a primitive skill. Learning to spell is not just a mastery of letter to sound connection; it is intertwined with students' abilities to read and their confidence levels. In order for a teacher to establish Writers' Workshop in first grade, each step must be carefully planned and detailed. Teachers must connect reading with student writing. This is done through daily reading (e.g., teacher read or silent reading) followed by journaling time for students, first in the form of pictures and then developed into sentences.

The use of Writers' Workshop requires a level of independence that primary age students have not yet developed (Baker, 1994). Primary students need to be provided with opportunities to copy the alliteration and form of stories to which they have been exposed. The use of constant practice, repetition, and minilessons can assist primary students to develop the skills and independence appropriate for their age. Also, the use of copying and experimentation provide primary aged students with the experience to continue to build their writing skills.

It suffices to say that primary students can enjoy publishing their stories and reading them aloud to classmates (Baker, 1994). However, other components of Writers' Workshop, such as class discussions, written reflections, and partner editing are out of the parameters of the capabilities of primary students. Thus, this is why there is a paucity of information on Writers' Workshop for primary aged students.

### *Step Up to Writing*

Step Up to Writing is a developed multisensory program used for information/expository writing (Pearson, Bowron, & Oliver, n.d.). According to the informational slides provided by Pearson et al., the use of Step Up to Writing:

1. guides students to write clear, concise, organized papers;
2. teaches students to write good topic sentences and statements that connect ideas using transitions;
3. helps students to establish order and control over the information in their writing;
4. requires students to support topics with examples and explanations as well as write a conclusion that stays on topic; and
5. gives students guidance, support, and direction in order to become a successful writer.

Through the use of direct instruction, guided practice, and independent practice, teachers can provide all of these guidelines.

Also, the use of Step Up to Writing takes students through the writing process: (a) prewrite and plan; (b) draft, revise, and edit; and (c) create a final copy, proofread, and share (Pearson et al., n.d.).

According to Pearson et al. (n.d.), Step Up to Writing, nonfiction writing, or expository writing, is addressed with the use of the *stoplight*, in which: (a) green means go (e.g., write a topic sentence); (b) yellow means slow down (e.g., give a reason, detail, or fact, use transitions between sentences); and (c) red means to stop (e.g., explain, give examples). Then students are to *go back* and write a conclusion, to remind the reader of the topic. The use of Step Up to Writing by educators provides students a skeleton or framework from which students can work. Educators may then branch out and incorporate a variety of other creative ways to “spice up” student writing.

### *6-Trait Writing*

As students go through the writing process, with the use of Step Up to Writing, educators are afforded the opportunity to teach students the traits of good writing. Those traits, as established by 6-Trait Writing are: (a) content, (b) organization, (c) style, (d) vocabulary, (e) sentence structure, and (f) conventions. The 6 traits are components of effective writing, broken down into manageable steps, created for an educator to use as an assessment tool in writing instruction (Kozlow & Bellamy, 2005).

Teachers can combine the writing process, 6 Traits, and Step Up to Writing (via the stoplight concept) into writing units and individual writing lessons. Educators should develop a writing curriculum starting at beginning of the year, designed to individually teach the 6-Traits to students through a variety of lessons based on the steps of the writing process (Pearson et al., n.d.). When all of the traits have been taught to students, teachers then develop units to teach expository or narrative style writing emphasizing some if not all of the 6-Traits. Combining these two schools of thought creates a more holistic approach to writing instruction.

### *Calkins*

Calkins (1986) is a nationally known researcher and writer in the area of teaching writing. Most recently, Calkins (2003) published a series of books that address the topics, concerns, steps, and genre types associated with student writing. In these books, she addressed topics such as: (a) narrative writing, (b) poetry, (c) nonfiction writing, and (d) writing workshops. There are a total of 10 books within her series; 1 book is accompanied by a CD-ROM so teachers can print off the resources listed within Calkins' books for use in their classroom.

In *The Nuts and Bolts of Teaching Writing*, Calkins' (2003) first book, she provided teachers with a comprehensive overview of the process and structures that can be used to develop writing in the classroom. With this book, teachers are guided through the steps to: (a) plan a writing curriculum, (b) manage writing workshops, (c) provide minilessons to follow, (d) conference with young writers, and (e) support techniques for English Language learners. In Chapter 3, Planning a Curriculum, she reported that, in order to effectively teach writing, one must have ongoing structures and changing units. Along with these techniques, it is important for teachers to have time to collaborate with fellow teachers on ideas for: (a) minilessons, (b) writing topics, (c) writing styles, and (d) teaching timelines. In an ideal world, teachers should be given time at the end of each year to collaborate and decide on the writing lessons for the next year. This provides teachers with adequate time and shared ideas on what to develop for units, how to lay them out, and what specific lessons would best meet the unit and the standards for writing within those units.

Calkins provided a list of principles that teachers should follow when they develop writing units of study.

1. Plan for students to write a lot.
2. Plan for the entire unit, with all its parts.
3. Plan what for we (teachers) will do for each part of the unit and what students will do.
4. Plan for continuity in texts, metaphors, and language.
5. Plan to support ongoing writing goals as well as unit specific goals.
6. Plan to instruct students in the use of a new writing tool in every unit (i.e., charts, booklets, idea webs).
7. Plan to end the unit with a celebration (i.e., author's tea)
8. Plan to save some of every student's writing and to start new pieces or kinds of writing with every unit. (p. 27)

Calkins provided a plethora of ideas and step by step instructions to successfully establish a writing curriculum within a classroom.

Also, Calkins (2003) separated all of the components in her series into units of study. Each unit of study has its own corresponding book that details all the necessary materials, preparation, and tools necessary to complete the unit of study. Some examples that Calkins provided are: (a) the steps necessary to set up a successful writing workshop; and (b) how to teach narrative writing, nonfiction writing, and poetry. Calkins provided assessments in her books for teachers to use, as well as examples of student work in order to demonstrate and provide evidence for the success of each lesson taught. Calkins provided teachers with an effective, logical, thought out way to plan and teach writing within a classroom.

### Best Writing Practices

Where does an educator go with all this information? It is important for teachers of the primary grades to use a combination of the schools of thought, such as Step Up to

Writing, 6 Traits (Pearson et al., n.d.) and Calkins' (2003) series of writing. The Calkins program is comprehensive, and she addressed: (a) the entire writing process, (b) genres of writing, and (c) the basics to establish a writing curriculum. With this series of books, a teacher can develop writing lessons that meet the requirements of state mandated accountability achievement tests, such as the CSAP (CDE, 1997).

Also, it is important for a teacher to develop a rubric so that both students and parents know the expectations for student writing. Once an educator has demonstrated what a rubric should consist of and how to create it, it is important to involve students opinions and ideas when creating rubrics used further down the road. According to Saddler and Andrade (2004), an important goal of writing instruction is to help students develop self-regulation skills. The use of instructional rubrics, as well as checklists, provide the scaffolding that students need to be self-regulated writers. With rubrics, the expectations for an assignment can be communicated in a list of the criteria of quality vs. poor writing and should be reinforced with the use of examples of high quality writing. Frequently, rubrics are used as a form of assessment but, when they are used for instructional purposes, they can be used for evaluation to help students understand how to: (a) plan writing goals, (b) revise, and (c) edit a piece of writing. With rubrics, the quantity and quality of feedback that contributes to a well crafted piece of writing is improved. It is done through: (a) conferences with students on their rubric scores and (b) teacher feedback.



### *Integrative Writing Unit with the Use of Picture Books*

Text, combined with picture books assist to demonstrate the multiple genres of writing, such as expository and narrative writing (Dean & Grierson, 2005). When exposed to multiple text genres, students can produce writing that is richer and more organized. Teaching opportunities arise from combined text picture books, so that teachers can provide students the opportunity to familiarize themselves with a variety of genres while, simultaneously, specific strategies are taught for comprehension and writing within those genres.

Teachers can develop lessons that model the desired processes of writing along with comprehension story elements through the use of combined text picture stories (Dean & Grierson, 2005). Some texts show the process of poetry through: (a) rhythm, (b) rhyme, and (c) tone. Whereas other texts can be used to demonstrate the components of narrative writing (e.g., character, problem, solution). In order for a teacher to capitalize on texts that are associated with the components of writing, they must provide students with continual exposure to text. In order to provide exposure, teachers must pick one component of the writing process or writing genre to focus on within a text (e.g., the use of many texts to teach only narrative writing). Through the use of text picture book lessons, students can learn effective writing skills. Combined text picture books are another vital tool for teachers to use when they instruct students how to write effectively.

### **Chapter Summary**

As established in this review, there are many strategies a teacher can use to develop a writing curriculum. Teachers should choose a writing school of thought, such as Calkins (2003), that is best suited for primary grade students. Also, teachers should

take time to plan their curriculum and develop rubrics for students to follow. Most importantly, teachers should make sure that a combination of text and picture books are integrated into the writing curriculum. With the use of all of these tools, a teacher can effectively develop a thematic unit on writing that prepares students for the writing requirements of the state, the district, and the school. In Chapter 3, this author will describe the audience, the procedure, and the goals of this project.

## Chapter 3

### METHOD

The purpose of this project was to develop a thematic unit on fairy tales in order to improve student writing with use of: (a) the writing process, (b) planning, and (c) organization. The lack of an established curriculum in the Poudre School District is what motivated this author to develop a thematic unit. As an educator in the district, this author understands the importance of writing. However, writing is most beneficial when it follows a set of organized, thought out plans, based on the writing process and best practices. Once all these steps are in place, students and teachers can be more excited, invested, and interested in writing.

#### Target Audience

This project was designed for application with students in first grade but it could be adapted for any primary grade. This thematic unit can serve as a guide to any teacher who needs assistance in how to instruct students in writing.

#### Goals and Procedures

The goal of this thematic unit was to provide teachers with a resource to facilitate detailed instruction in writing. The thematic unit is a combination of literature, state and district standards, the writing process, and previous schools of thought. In each lesson, a story element of a fairy tale is detailed as well as a trait from 6-Trait writing; also, there are multiple ways for students to practice what they have learned (e.g., worksheets, games, individual and partner writing time, and plays). Each lesson is organized,

detailed, and presented so that any teacher can access, use, and apply it within the classroom.

### Peer Assessment

The assessment of this thematic unit was acquired from four practicing teachers through informal feedback, recommendations, and suggestions for further units. Each teacher was given a copy of the thematic unit and asked to review it for its timeliness, relevancy to standards, and usability within the classroom. They provided comments and suggestions on the hard copy.

### Chapter Summary

The lack of a writing curriculum within the Poudre School District is a point of stress and concern for probationary and continuing contract teachers. Through this project, this author used knowledge gained from literature and personal teaching experiences to provide her colleagues with a thematic unit that effectively addresses the concerns and needs of teaching primary students how to write. In Chapter 4, this author provided user friendly lessons in the form of a unit, for any teacher unfamiliar with the writing process and specific writing schools of thought. The unit incorporated and demonstrated for teachers and students the importance of tying literature with writing. Use of this unit should lead students to higher success rate in writing. Presented in Chapter 5 will be a discussion of the unit, as well as the reviews from the practicing teachers.

## Chapter 4

### RESULTS

The purpose of this project was to design a writing unit, incorporating fairy tales, to be used at a first grade level, to teach students the writing process as well as the components of a good piece of writing. The lessons were based upon information gathered and organized by various writing schools of thoughts via their resources. The unit is three weeks long and includes vocabulary, graphics, and a mixture of 6 Trait Writing and Step Up to Writing. Lessons are to be completed daily but have enough flexibility within in them to be tailored as an educator sees fit. Lessons are structured so that every or every other lesson is introducing a trait from 6 Traits as well as reinforcing previously learned traits. This unit will not focus specifically on the traits of Voice and Sentence Fluency. Voice should be acknowledged and demonstrated to students by the educator as they read listed fairy tales within each lesson.

The unit contains: (a) state standards; (b) a list of daily materials; (c) worksheets; (d) checklists; (e) parent letters; (f) and rubrics. Each lesson should take between 45 minutes to an hour to complete, depending upon how the educator chooses to tailor it to his or her classroom.

## Fairy Tale Thematic Unit

**This unit should be taught in the second semester of the school year so that students are more familiar with writing and with writing pieces that are a longer than a sentence or two.**

**It is also to your discretion as to how long each lesson takes you, every class as well as every child is different, and each lesson is flexible enough that it can be extended, altered, or made to fit an individual class.**

### Description/content area:

This unit will be used as an overview to assist students in learning the steps of the writing process, Step Up to Writing, and 6 + 1 trait writing through the use of literature. Students will learn information on:

- I. The writing process and how each step is successfully completed:
  - a. Prewriting
  - b. Drafting
  - c. Editing
  - d. Correcting
  - e. Publishing
- II. Students will also begin to understand the formula of writing used in Step up to Writing:
  - a. Topic Sentences
  - b. Supporting sentences
  - c. Concluding sentences
- III. Students will be introduced to some of the 6 +1 traits. Other traits may be introduced in another writing unit, but for ease of understanding the following bolded traits will be taught.
  - a. **Ideas**
  - b. **Organization**
  - c. Voice
  - d. **Word Choice**
  - e. Sentence Fluency
  - f. **Conventions (in the form of high frequency words, capitalization and periods should always be addressed in every piece of writing)**
  - g. **Presentation**
- IV. Students will develop a sense of understanding of the components of a fairy tale, such as:
  - a. Fairy tales beginning with “Once upon a time” and ending in “They lived happily ever after.
  - b. Events happen in threes
  - c. There is typically a hero and a villain

Grade Level: First Grade

Length of Unit:  
3 weeks

Standards:

Reading/Writing

- Standard 1: Students read and understand a variety of materials.
- Standard 2: Students write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- Standard 3: Students write and speak using conventional grammar usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.
- Standard 4: Students apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.
- Standard 5: Students read to locate, select, and make use of relevant information from a variety of media, reference, and technological sources.

Theatre:

- Standard 6: Students know and apply connections between theatre and other disciplines.

Enduring Understanding:

The first lesson will be a “royal procession” in which the educator will enter the classroom dressed as character from a fairy tale (i.e. a princess, a prince, a queen, a king, etc.). The educator will then proceed to read a prepared declaration as an anticipatory set to trigger student interest, along with describing what the unit will entail.

Pre-Assessment:

The educator may assess students on their knowledge of fairy tales by using a K-W-L chart. The educator should also have the students write a fairy tale to use as the first writing sample so as to have a base line to chart growth and progress as students move through individual lessons.

Materials:

Materials will differ depending upon the lesson being taught that particular day. All necessary materials needed for a specific lesson will be included within that days lesson plan. Do allocate time to preview the lesson so as to gather literature either from a school or public library.

Daily Lessons: All 14 lessons are included within this unit plan.

Assessment:

Assessment will come in a variety of forms. First, students will be assessed on their prior knowledge of fairy tales. At the end of the unit students will be assessed again to check gains in understanding. Second, teachers will help students create and keep a writing portfolio. This portfolio will include the first

writing sample (the base), subsequent writing samples, nine writing activities (including rough drafts), editing sheets, peer feedback, and writing rubrics (teacher and student created).



## Lesson One Royal Introduction

### Duration:

30-40 minutes

### Objective:

Students' schemas and interests will be peaked upon this introductory lesson. Students will be able to show their excitement of the unit through an interest inventory. Students will also be able to show prior knowledge of fairy tales through the use of a K-W-L (what you **K**now, what you **W**ant to know, and what you **L**earned) chart.

### Transition:

This lesson can be started at the beginning of a writing block.

### Standards:

#### Reading/Writing:

Standard 4: Students apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.

Standard 6: Students read and recognize literature as a record of human experience.

#### Theatre:

Standard 6: Students know and apply connections between theatre and other disciplines.

### Daily Materials:

- A royal costume such as a queen, king, princess, etc. (requires pre-preparation)
- The royal declaration (Appendix)
- Chart paper
- Pre-made KWL chart
- Sticky note pads (2-3 pads)
- Interest inventory (Appendix)
- Markers
- White board, easel

### Preplanning:

- A royal costume
- The assistance of a paraprofessional or another teacher will be needed in order for the educator to dress in a royal costume.
- Make sure all materials are within reach of where the lesson will be taught.
- KWL chart

Pre-Assessment: None

Teaching the lesson:

Part A. Royal Skit:

1. Explain to your class that you need to go to the office and make a few photocopies for our next activity, (whoever the assistant is) will be watching over you while I am gone.
2. Prior to leaving the classroom, ask your students to have a seat on the floor wherever the read aloud section is located.
3. Explain to the students that when you get back from the office you will read a book to the class and complete an activity.
4. Then leave the classroom to change while the assistant watches over the class.
5. Reenter the classroom dressed in royal attire, carrying the proclamation.
6. Wave to the class saying "Good day, good day, I am so glad you could make it to our royal gathering. I dare say; have you seen your teacher anywhere?"
7. Move towards the read aloud area, waiting for a response.
8. Upon receiving responses from students, state: "Well, we shall get started without him or her, I have much to say, and only a short time to say it. I am on my way to the ball, you know!"
9. Read the declaration.
10. Look towards the clock and sigh, "Dear me, look at the time, I really must go, it has been so wonderful meeting all of you. I do hope you enjoy your visit with your teacher into the land of fairy tales! Good day, Good day."
11. Exit the classroom to go change back into your clothes.
12. While you are gone the assistant may discuss with the children their ideas, their excitements, comments etc. about the fairy tale proclamation.

Part B:

1. At this point you reenter the classroom professing many apologies for taking so long in the office, telling the students that they principal needed to talk to you.
2. The children will be excited to express what happened while you were gone, and you should play the part by being shocked and surprised, stating " I didn't want to miss them, what a bummer! I know I should have said to (principal's name) I have to get back to our class, I don't want to miss anything."
3. Insist that the students tell you all about what happened. (At this point the assistant may leave)
4. The children will explain what happened and what the proclamation stated, to the best of their ability. Have a copy of it on hand to further extend the discussion if they miss any major points.
5. Use chart paper to list out the main points of the proclamation.
6. Once finished with the discussion tell students that it is true they will be studying about fairy tales and as well as learning how to write them.

Guided Practice:

1. Grab a pad of sticky notes and explain to the children that you would like them to write down the things they already know about fairy tales.

2. Demonstrate this by writing on one sticky note something you know about fairy tales, such as they use magic.
3. Then place this sticky note into the K portion of the KWL chart.

Independent practice:

1. You then will ask the students to fill out their own sticky notes.
2. It would be wise to limit the amount of material they can write. The students should receive two sticky notes in which they can write one thing they know about fairy tales on each note.
4. Once the students have written their knowledge on the sticky note, have the students place their notes under the K of the pre-made KWL chart.
5. Read what the students wrote on their sticky notes aloud to the class.

Guided Practice:

1. Repeat the same steps as above.
2. Using a sticky note write down one thing you would like to learn about fairy tales, such as, why are dragons always bad guys?
3. Place this sticky note under the W of the KWL chart.

Independent Practice:

1. Ask the students to write what they want to learn on their sticky notes, again limiting the amount
  - a. You may want to let the students use 3 sticky notes, one idea on each note, for they may have more ideas on what they want to learn.
2. Have students place their sticky notes onto the KWL chart, this time under the W.
3. You will want to read these aloud to the students as well.

Closure:

You will want to review what students were introduced to today. You will need to reinstate that students will be learning about different fairy tales and how to write their own. Tell students you are so excited and can't wait to get started on reading and writing fairy tales tomorrow. To make sure all students are interested in the unit have them complete an interest inventory prior to moving on with the next activity (Appendix).

Accommodations:

This whole group lesson will be beneficial to all students, including ELL students. For students struggling with word choice and writing their ideas, they may illustrate what they know and what they want to learn instead.

Assessment/Evaluation:

The KWL chart will be a visual assessment; this chart may be used to create a rubric for students written fairy tales. It may also be used to create a teacher checklist for student comprehension of fairy tales. The interest inventory will help you in assisting students who are struggling writers as well as help students narrow down their list of interests to write about.

## Lesson Two

### Components of a Fairy Tale

Duration: 40-50 minutes

Objective:

Students will be able to start to identify the parts of a fairy tale. Students will also be able to verbalize the origin of fairy tales. The parts of a fairy tale will be used for the duration of the unit.

Transition:

This lesson should come after the skit during the next writing block.

Standards:

Reading/Writing:

Standard 1: Students read and understand a variety of materials

Standard 4: Students apply their thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.

Daily Materials:

- Once Upon a Time bulletin board
- Chart paper
- Markers
- Fairy Tale Folders
- *The Gingerbread Boy* by Paul Galdone
- Handwriting paper

Pre-preparation:

- You will need to create a bulletin board that maps out the class' progression through the steps they will learn down the Once Upon a Time road, see attached example.
- You will also need to prep chart paper with the heading: Characteristics of a Fairy Tale. This is where you will write down the information that you and the students will gather during the reading of *The Gingerbread Boy*.
- You will also need to create construction paper folders for students to keep all their information and writing pieces in an organized manner, see attached example.

Anticipatory Set:

Remind students that on the previous day they met a royal fairy tale guest, who talked to them about fairy tales and the proclamation they will follow for the next few weeks. Tell them today that they will begin their journey on the path of learning about fairy tales.

Pre-Assessment:

Asks students if they know the parts of a fairy tale, what makes a fairy tale a fairy tale.

Teaching the Lesson:

Reading of the story (15 minutes)

1. Gather the students around the Once Upon a Time bulletin board.
2. Explain the bulletin board to the students. Tell them that we will follow this road map as we learn about fairy tales. The road map will also visually demonstrate where students are at in the writing process as they move along in writing their own fairy tales.
3. Tell the students that as we move along you will move a picture of a crown to each position on the road map.
4. Once you have explained the bulletin board, have the students gather around the reading area. You should have the prepared chart paper on an easel by the reading area.
5. Tell the students that you will read them the fairy tale *The Gingerbread Boy*. Let students know that fairy tales were originally told orally, meaning the first fairy tales were not written down but were passed from person to person by story telling.
6. Inform the children they have two tasks during this story. First, to try to remember all they can about the story. Second, to look for patterns or clues as to how a fairy tale is written.
  - a. During the discussion after the story you will assist them in understanding the characteristics of fairy tales.
7. Read the story.
8. While reading, periodically stop and ask questions about what is currently happening in the story.
9. After you have finished reading the story, have the students go back to their desks.
10. Tell them that you are going to give them a piece of paper and you want them to write down all that they can remember from *The Gingerbread Boy*.
  - a. This should hopefully not be too difficult. If a child is struggling with writing their ideas have them use pictures to demonstrate instead.
11. Give the students 5 minutes to complete this activity.
12. Once they have finished ask the students if this was difficult or hard to do.
13. Inform students that you know what them to go back and remember the patterns they discovered about fairy tales.

Guided Practice (10-15minutes):

1. Display chart paper for all the students to see
2. On a white board or chalkboard start taking students patterns or repeating characteristics.
3. Using your list of fairy tale characteristics
  - a. Start with Once Upon a Time
  - b. End with Happily Ever After

- c. Hero
  - d. Villain/Bad Guy
  - e. Things happen in threes
- 4. Tailor students ideas and write the characteristics of a fairy tale on the chart paper.
- 5. Let students know this will be up on the board for them to look at and use while they write their own fairy tales.
- 6. Pass out their fairy tale folders (attached).
  - a. Allow them time to decorate/color folder.
  - b. Remind them to claim their fame and put their name on their work.

Closure:

Review with students what they learned today about fairy tales. Make sure they understand that fairy tales were once told orally. Let students know that tomorrow they will begin brainstorming ideas on what their own fairy tales will include.

Accommodations:

The only accommodations that should be made should occur during the rewriting of what students remember about the fairy tale you had just read. If students are struggling writers, have them draw a picture and label it with one or two words.

Assessment/Evaluation: None

### Lesson Three

#### Ideas

Duration: 35-45 minutes

#### Objective:

Students will be presented with an introductory lesson to the concept of ideas, from 6 + 1 traits. Students will begin to understand what it means to generate ideas for writing as well as the understanding that gathering ideas is the same as prewriting.

Transition: This lesson should follow Lesson Two.

#### Standards:

##### Reading/Writing:

Standard 1: Students read and understand a variety of materials.

Standard 4: Students apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.

#### Daily Materials:

- *Yeh-Shen: A Cinderella Story* from China by Ai-Ling Louie
- Sample ideas paragraphs (Appendix)
- Ideas graphic organizer transparency (Appendix)
- Overhead
- Vis-à-vis markers
- Small white boards
- White board makers

#### Anticipatory set (5 minutes):

Ask students to get a white board and white board marker. Make sure that students do not start using their white boards until directed to do so. Once students are resettled at their desks read aloud the following paragraph:

I couldn't ask for a better job. In fact I think my job is a dream come true. I get to travel to many places and see many things. I help basketball players win their games and hikers climb to the highest peaks. Once you know how to tie my laces I can take you anywhere. I protect your feet and keep your toes safe from rocks, gum, germs, and bicycle spokes. Some places even say; no shirt no \_\_\_\_\_, no service. What am I?

Ask students to write down on their white boards the main idea of the paragraph, or what the paragraph was about. Once students have written their answers on their boards have them hold them in the air for you to see.

#### Pre-Assessment:

The students' answers on their white boards provide a quick assessment to see who and who does or does not know what main ideas are. If students do not

understand main idea, construct a further lesson to demonstrate how to identify the main idea in a piece of writing.

Teaching the Lesson (15 minutes):

1. Tell the students that today you will be teaching them what ideas are. Let them know that a good idea is important to reading and writing a story.
2. Have the students gather around the reading center area.
3. Tell the students you are going to read them a story and you want them to pick the main idea of the story.
4. Read the story *Yeh-Shen: A Cinderella Story* from China.
5. Once you have finished the story ask the students what the main idea of the story was.
  - a. The main idea is: Yeh-Shen is made to be a servant and is mistreated by her sisters but eventually gets the prince, etc.
  - b. See if students made the text-to-text connection between this Cinderella story and the traditional story.
6. After your discussion, have the students go back to their seats.

Guided Practice (10-15 minutes):

1. Let the students know that you are going to read a few more paragraphs and you want them to write the main idea of the paragraphs on their white boards (see attached).
  - a. This will help you recheck to see which students still do not comprehend what main ideas are.
  - b. You may use these paragraphs however you wish. They demonstrate the difference between a basic simple ideas paragraph and a high quality ideas paragraph. They also demonstrate how other details can distract from the main point in a paragraph.
    - i. I would make it a point to show the students the difference between all of these things.
2. Have the students put their white boards away.
3. Once they are seated again, display the ideas graphic organizer on the overhead.
4. Show the students how to fill in the graphic organizer. Use *Yeh-Shen: A Cinderella Story* from China, to fill in the ideas web.
  - a. Put Yeh-Shen in the middle bubble and move out.
5. Erase this off of the overhead and complete the exercise again this time using student ideas to fill in the web.

Independent Practice (10 minutes):

1. Let the students know it is now their turn to fill out their own ideas graphic organizer.
2. Distribute a paper copy of the ideas graphic organizer to each student.
3. Tell them that you want them to fill in each bubble with all their ideas that they have for their own fairy tale.
  - a. Even if it is not organized with one point in the middle, this is ok. You mostly want to students to be brainstorming all the things they could be writing about.



4. Let them know some of their ideas they may not use but to remember the ones they like the most. The one a student likes the most will become the main idea of his or her own story.

Closure:

Once the students have finished filling out their ideas graphic organizers have them place them in their fairy tales folder, to save for next time. Review with them what main ideas are and how they are the backbone of a story. Without an idea and specifically a main idea the story will be confusing like some of the paragraphs we looked at earlier. Tell them to dream about which idea they liked the most because next time they will decide on one and start writing.

Accommodations:

It will be important that all students participate in this lesson and since most of the graphic organizers will be filled out using one or two words, most children will be able to do this. If there is a child struggling with coming up with a word, assist them in their brainstorming and if need be write it on a white board and the child may copy it onto their paper. This will help build vocabulary for all students.

Assessment/Evaluation:

The white board portion of this activity is a quick and easy assessment to check in to see if students truly understand what the main idea is. If one wants to, they can create a checklist or even an assessment worksheet from this activity.

## Lesson Four

### Ideas and Topic Sentences

#### Duration:

30-40 minutes

#### Objective:

Students will be able to decide upon a main idea and begin to write topic sentences for their fairy tales.

#### Transition:

This lesson should follow up Lesson Three. Have the students get their fairy tales folders out, a pencil, and then have their writing brains warmed up.

#### Standards:

##### Reading/Writing:

Standard 1: Students read and understand a variety of materials.

Standard 2: Students write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Standard 4: Students apply their thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.

#### Daily Materials:

- Fairy Tale Folders
- Ideas Graphic Organizer (Appendix)
- Chart Paper
- Green Sentence strips
- Notebook paper
- White Board
- White Board Markers
- Magnifying Glasses
- The following books:
  - *The Emperor Penguin's New Clothes* by Janet Perlman
  - *The Stinky Cheese Man and other Fairly Stupid Tales* by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith (use whatever stories you wish)
  - *The Three Little Pigs and the Big Bad Wolf* by Barry Moser
  - *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*

#### Pre-Preparation:

- You will need to cut strips of green paper (3" by 6"), you should probably cut 66, enough for students to have 3 each
- You may want to cut yellow strips, same size, about 75, enough for students to have 3 each.

- You may want to also cut pink strips, same size, about 198, enough for students to have 9 each.
  - These strips are the necessary materials to teach the students to use the Step Up to Writing format.

#### Anticipatory Set:

Have the students pull out their ideas graphic organizer sheet. Pass out a magnifying glass to all students, if you have enough. If you do not, use it first and then pass around what you have. Have the students investigate all their ideas. Tell them to look for the idea that will turn out to be the BEST idea for their fairy tale.

#### Teaching the Lesson:

1. Once students have decided what idea will be the best for their story, have then put a star next to it.
2. Then have the students gather in the reading area and read to them the beginnings of the various books listed under daily materials.
3. Once you have read the beginning of all these stories, ask them what they noticed, were there any patterns?
  - a. We are mostly looking for how the story begins such as: “Once upon a time”, “A long time ago”, or “In a land far, far, away”.
4. Discuss what they noticed, tell them when we get back to our seats I will review those patterns again.
5. Ask the students which fairy tale they want to hear finished.
6. Finish reading that fairy tale.
7. Have the students go back to their desks.
8. Review again what the patterns were from the stories you read and write them on the board.
9. Tell the students you will use these to help you write your topic sentence for your fairy tale.
10. Let the students know what idea you chose to be your main idea of your fairy tale.

#### Guided Practice:

1. You should do a quick mini lesson on fat vs. skinny sentences.
  - a. Write your sentence on chart paper so that you may refer back to it during the next lesson.
2. You should use your main idea in your mini lesson.
  - a. I.e. “The idea I chose was about dragons”
  - b. Then write the sentence: “There once lived a dragon”.
3. Ask the students if this a sentence
  - a. Some may want to say no. Make sure they understand this is a sentence but that it could be better, a fatter sentence, that right now it is a skinny sentence.
4. You will work with students to make this sentence into a fatter sentence.
5. It may take up to 7 minutes to get the sentence fatter.
  - a. You should start with, “How about I add, Once upon a time there....”

- b. Then continue to ask students questions to enhance the sentence, such as, what does he look like, what is his attitude like (nice, mean, etc.).?
6. Once you have gone through this you should end up with a very nice topic sentence
  - a. I.e. Once upon a time there lived a big, green and purple, fire-breathing dragon.
7. Once you have finished the sentence, rewrite it onto a green slip and glue it to a piece of notebook paper. Let the students know this is now your topic sentence.

**Independent Practice:**

1. Have the students' use their white boards or a scrap piece of paper to come up with their own topic sentence.
2. While they are writing walk around the room assisting those who need help and checking on the students progress.
3. Make sure you check each student's work prior to them writing their topic sentence onto their green sheet.
4. Once a child has written a fat topic sentence, give them a sheet of green paper in which they can transfer their sentence to.
5. Once they have done this give them a piece of notebook paper for them to glue the green strip to.
6. They may then put this piece of paper into their fairy tale folder and then put their fairy tale folder away.

**Closure:**

Once all students have finished up their work have them gather near the Once Upon A Time board. Move the crown to the next portion of the map, moving from ideas/prewriting to drafting. This will allow students to visually see their progress through the writing process. You may also want to post all the notes you have been taking on chart paper about fairy tales on the bulletin board. You can then turn this area into the writing center area.

**Accommodations:**

While you are walking around, you may assist students who may need further accommodations, such as writing their idea/sentence onto the white board for them to copy onto their green slip. This visual component of Step Up to Writing will assist visual learners in the writing process.

**Assessment/Evaluation:**

There is no formal assessment for this lesson. Evaluation of this lesson will be whether or not your student can choose a main topic and write a corresponding topic sentence.

## Lesson Five Word Choice

Duration: 35-40 minutes

### Objective:

Students will be presented with an introductory lesson to the concept of word choice, from 6 + 1 traits via the use of synonyms. Students will begin to understand that there is more than one word that means the same thing.

### Transition:

Have the students get out their fairy tale folders and get ready for writing.

### Standards:

#### Reading/Writing:

Standard 1: Students read and understand a variety of materials.

Standard 4: Students apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.

### Daily Materials:

- *Three Kind Mice* by Vivian Sathre
- Chart paper with an ice cream sundae drawn on it; labeled “Our Tasty Ice Cream Words”
- Sticky notes
- Pencils
- Synonym cards (Appendix)
  - Have them separated into five baggies, so that you may have five groups of children using them at a time.

### Anticipatory set (5 minutes):

Have the students get out their fairy tale folders and come join you around the Once Upon a Time road bulletin board. Move the crown from ideas onto the word tasty ice cream sundae picture. Tell the students that today they are going to learn about how to pick out the tasty ice cream words!

### Pre-Assessment:

Check to see if students know what synonyms are. Use the example: What would be another way to say happy? This will help you check to see what students have synonym knowledge.

### Teaching the Lesson (15 minutes):

1. Have students stay in the reading center area.
2. Pass out one sticky note to each child.

3. Tell them that while you are reading the story you want them to write down one or two words they hear that they like, words they'd use in their own story. Have them pretend to be good word choice detectives.
4. Read *Three Kind Mice*
5. Once you have finished the story, have the students go back to their desks with their sticky notes.
6. Then call students up one at a time to read their word, say why they chose that word, and then have them place it on the chart paper.
7. Go back through all the words again with the students and ask them if they'd like to change any words or any new words.
  - a. You may add any words that you really liked.
8. Tell the students these words will become tasty ice cream words they should use when writing their stories.
9. Then draw sticks and ask those students which word they liked the best.
10. See if they can come up with a synonym for that word.
11. Repeat these steps a few times to ensure students understand what a synonym is.
12. Tell students they will need to keep the idea of synonyms in their mind because they are going to play synonym bingo!
13. Have the students' move to a table where they can all gather around.

Guided Practice (5 minutes):

1. Tell the students that they will be playing synonym memory with the plastic bags that you pre-made.
2. Lay out all the cards face down.
3. Pick a student to play with you.
4. Go back and forth playing memory until you make a synonym match.
5. Whoever has the most matches, wins.

Independent Practice (10 minutes):

1. Break the students up into groups.
2. Allow the students to play for 10 minutes or so.
3. Walk around the room to monitor how students are doing during the game as well as to see which students are struggling and which students are doing well with synonyms.

Closure:

Have the children clean up the game and bring the zip lock baggies back to you. Have them go back to their seats. Ask the students what they learned during the game. Ask them which words were their favorite from the game. You may also ask them if any part of the game was hard, it may lead into a mini lesson on social skills and working in groups.

Accommodations:

Accommodations should not be necessary for this lesson because students are able to work together and assist one another. If there is a child who cannot physically turn the cards or sit on the floor, accommodate for that child however you see fit.

Assessment/Evaluation:

The synonym game will help students practice word choice skills and expose them to various words that mean the same thing.

It would be good to include this game as part of a literacy center so that students may play it again and have repeated exposure to the concept of synonyms.

## Lesson Six Word Choice

Duration: 30-40 minutes

Objective:

Students will be continuing to work with word choice. They will use the information they learned in the previous lesson to complete this lesson.

Transition:

Have the students get out their fairy tale folders and get ready for writing.

Standards:

Reading/Writing:

Standard 1: Students read and understand a variety of materials.

Standard 2: Students write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Standard 4: Students apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.

Daily Materials:

- *Dear Zoo* by Rod Campbell
- Bucket of plastic animals
- Handwriting paper
- Construction paper squares
- Pencils
- Whiteboard
- Whiteboard markers

Anticipatory set (5 minutes):

Read to the students the book *Dear Zoo* by Rod Campbell, this story is a deviation from fairy tales but it will help students better understand that details and word choice are important to helping readers know what a story is about.

Pre-Assessment:

None

Teaching the Lesson:

Guided Practice (10 minutes):

1. Quickly discuss with students what the book was about and how the words on the pages really helped to explain the main idea of each page of the story.
2. Read to the students your prepared version of the activity in which they will do.
  - a. I wrote to the zoo to send me a pet. They sent me a..., it is as tall as a giant, covered in spots, and nibbles on the highest leaves on the tree.
3. Have students guess what your animal is (giraffe)



4. Once you have done this, have your students pick out the words that made the riddle tasty and easy to guess.
5. Tell the students that they will now get a chance to write their own riddles.
6. Go around the room and have the students reach into the bucket full of animals and randomly pick out an animal.
7. Tell the students this is the animal that someone else has to guess and that they should try to keep it as hidden as they can.
  - a. If you do not have plastic animals, pictures of different animals would work just the same.

Independent Practice (10 minutes):

1. Tell the students that it is now their turn to write.
2. Hand out handwriting paper and the students go to work.
3. You will need to walk around the room and assist any students who are struggling to come up with characteristics of their animal to use in their riddle.
4. Once all students are finished have them draw an illustration of their animal on the top of the page.
5. Then have the students take a piece of construction paper, fold it so that it has a half an inch flap at the top and have them glue this half inch section to their paper. The image will be similar to the cage shown in the pop up book.

Closure:

Have each child share his or her riddle with the class. At the end of the sharing, talk about what words students used that were really good word choices that helped them guess what animal they had.

Accommodations:

Use whatever accommodations you see fit for your class. There is a visual, physical, and auditory component to this lesson, which will help to address the various learning styles of your students.

Assessment/Evaluation:

As students come up with riddles you will be able to quickly assess or evaluate whether or not a student understands how important word choice is in solving a riddle or writing a story.

## Lesson 7 Organization

Duration: 35-45 minutes

Objective:

Students will be able to understand the difference between a paragraph that is poorly organized and one that is properly organized.

Transition:

Have students get out their fairy tale folders.

Standards:

Reading/Writing:

Standard 1: Students read and understand a variety of materials.

Standard 2: Students write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Standard 4: Students apply their thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.

Daily Materials:

- Fairy Tale Folders
- Beginning, middle, end graphic organizer (Appendix)
- Story map (Appendix)
- Story map pictures (Appendix)
- Sample organization paragraphs (Appendix)
- Glue
- Scissors
- *The Little Red Hen* by Paul Galdone

Pre-Preparation:

- You will need to photocopy the story map pictures sheet, 1 page per student.
- You will also need to photocopy the story map and graphic organizer, 1 of each page per student.

Anticipatory Set:

Have the students remain at their seats. Put up the first organization paragraph. Read it and discuss if it has good organization (has a main idea and they all connect together, sentences make sense, and all details add to the main idea). Read the next paragraph and discuss it as well. Go through all of the paragraphs asking for student input on how to make poorly organized paragraphs better.

Teaching the Lesson:

1. Have the students join you in the reading center.

2. Read the story *The Little Red Hen*.
3. After you have read the story have the students go back to their desks.

Guided Practice:

1. Tell the students that you will all work together putting the story, *The Little Red Hen* back together.
2. Pass out the story map and the story map pictures.
3. Have the students work with the person next to them or another partner (you choose what works best) and have them cut the pictures out and place them where they think they best fit.
4. Have the students work with their partners for 5-7 minutes.
5. Once all students are finished or close to finishing, have them all go back to their desks with their organizers and cut out pictures.
6. Discuss as a group which picture should go where and why.
7. Once you have decided upon where all the pictures belong, have the students glue their pictures to their sheet.
8. Then working with the students, come up with the words that would go with each picture in association with the sequence of the story.
9. Tell the students that they are now going to do their own worksheet to help organize their thoughts.
10. Demonstrate how the beginning, middle, and end graphic organizer works with your own story, use it on an overhead.
  - a. Make sure to read each question so students know what each one is asking them to do.

Independent Practice:

1. Tell the students it is now their turn to fill out the organizer.
2. Pass out the organizer and have the students fill it out.
3. Walk around the classroom assisting students when need be.
  - a. It may be best to break this up into two days. Have the students fill out their beginning, middle, and end graphic organizer with a few words, pictures, etc. This will help them organize what they will want to add into their first rough draft.

Closure:

When students are finished with their organizational organizer have them put it in their fairy tale folder. Ask the students what they learned about organization and why it is important for every story to be properly organized.

Accommodations:

This lesson includes not only a writing piece but also a drawing piece, so it is not only written but also visual. If further accommodations need to be made for students, any aspect of this lesson will be easy to modify.

Assessment/Evaluation:

There is no formal assessment but you can evaluate student's ideas for their own stories based upon how they complete their organizer.

Lesson 8  
Drafting with Yellows

Duration: 40-50 minutes

Objective:

Students will be able to take the information learned from the word choice and organization lessons to their rough draft of their fairy tales. Students will also be able to understand and apply the concept of yellow strips from Step Up to Writing.

Transition:

Have the students get out their fairy tale folders, which is holding all their work thus far. Have the students leave these on their desks and gather around the Once Upon a Time bulletin board.

Standards:

Reading/Writing:

Standard 1: Students read and understand a variety of materials

Standard 4: Students apply their thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.

Daily Materials:

- Once Upon a Time bulletin board
- Yellow strips (previously cut during lesson 4)
- Green Strips
- Fairy Tale Folders
- White board/white board markers
- Paper clips
- Handwriting paper

Pre-preparation:

- If you did not cut the yellow strips prior to this lesson you will have to do that now.
- You may need to cut more green strips of paper in order for students to rewrite topic sentences if they wish to do so.

Anticipatory Set:

Ask the students to guide you as to where the crown should go next on the bulletin board, drafting. You may pick a student to move the crown or you may move it. Review with the students what they have been learning. Let them know that today is the big day to start on the details of the story, reminding them to use fat sentences.

Pre-Assessment:

Checking in to make sure students understand and can vocalize what they have already learned.

Teaching the Lesson:

Guided Practice

1. Have the students go back to their desks
2. Bring out your notebook paper with the green topic sentence glued on it.
3. Ask students, based on what they have learned about word choice, if they think you should modify or change your topic sentence.
  - c. You will want to assist them in moving towards yes.
4. Work with the students to come up with tastier, more exciting words to start your topic sentence.
  - a. When finished it may become: Once upon a time in a beautiful tree filled land, lived an enormous, bright purple and green, fire-breathing dragon.
5. Demonstrate to your students how you will rewrite your sentence onto another green slip and then glue it over the top of your previous strip.
  - a. Let students know that a good writer makes numerous changes to their stories when they write them. They are always making their sentences and stories more interesting for their readers.
6. Once you have glued your green strip onto your notebook paper, get out the yellow strips.
7. Explain to the students yellow is the color on a stop light that means to slow down and that is exactly what you are going to do, slow down and write a detail about your story.
8. Tell them that you are going to go back and look at your ideas graphic organizer to see if there is anything you want to use.
9. Then tell them you are going to look at your organization graphic organizer as well.
10. Let them know these are the same steps they will take when deciding what other details they want to add to their fairy tales.
11. Tell them to keep in mind the characteristics of a fairy tale:
  - a. Things happening in 3's
  - b. Princess/Prince/etc.
  - c. A villain
12. Remind students that the parts of a fairy tale are listed on the "Once Upon a Time" bulletin board.
13. Let the students know that you are going to start with writing about your hero first.
14. Using the white board, work on the sentence you wish to use to describe who the hero is of your fairy tale.
  - a. Your green sentence is: Once upon a time in a beautiful tree filled land; lived an enormous, bright purple and green, fire-breathing dragon named Warsaw.

- b. Your next sentence may go as follows: Warsaw loved living in the beautiful land called Gallatin and he was always kind to everyone he met.
  15. Let the students know that tomorrow you will go back and add further details to Warsaw but that now you want to add your villain as your next detail. Refer back to your organizers again (it is important that the students use the resources they already have thought of, it will make it easier for them to write.)
    - a. Write your next sentence about a villain next to the other sentence on the white board.
  16. After you have written these two sentences transfer them to yellow strips.
  17. It may be important to let the students' help you alter one of the sentences you wrote to further reinforce the concept of word choice, and fat vs. skinny sentences.
  18. Once you have finished writing your sentences on the yellow strips, paperclip them together and put them back into the fairy tale folder.
  19. Let students know writing their fairy tales the first time is called drafting.
- Independent Practice:
1. Have the students work on their own yellow strips.
  2. Tell the students that you want them to write their sentences on handwriting paper first.
    - a. Tell them that spelling does not matter as of yet but to still try their best.
  3. You want to check them before they write them onto yellow strips.
  4. You should walk around the classroom and assist students as they need it.
  5. Make sure to check each student's work before letting him or her transfer his or her sentence to a yellow strip.
  6. Once they have finished writing their yellow sentences have them paper clip them together and put everything in their fairy tale folder.
  7. They may then put them away.

Closure:

Tell the students that we will pick up where we left off tomorrow. Also let them know that they will begin to add pinks to their stories, further details about their yellows.

Accommodations:

If you have a student who is a struggling writer they may dictate their sentence to you while you write it on a white board and they can transfer the sentence onto a yellow strip from there. If they are struggling to think of a sentence have them draw it out first.

Anything can be adjusted or modified for whatever suits your students the best.

Assessment/Evaluation: None

## Lesson 9

### Drafting with Pinks

#### Duration:

This lesson will take two days, 40-50 minutes the first day, and however many minutes students may need the next day.

#### Objective:

Students will continue to draft their fairy tales. Students will also be able to understand and apply the concept of pink strips from Step Up to Writing.

#### Transition:

Have the students get out their fairy tale folders, which are holding all their work thus far. Have the students pull out their rough drafts.

#### Standards:

##### Reading/Writing:

Standard 1: Students read and understand a variety of materials

Standard 4: Students apply their thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.

#### Daily Materials:

- Once Upon a Time bulletin board
- Pink strips (previously cut during lesson 4)
- Fairy Tale Folders
- White board/white board markers
- Glue
- Visual aides of transition words, high frequency words, and tasty ice cream words
  - Transition Words:
    - Next, Then, After, Second, Third, Finally, etc.
  - High Frequency Words:
    - Use your word wall words, making sure all students know where they are located.
- Handwriting paper
- Teacher prepared story

#### Pre-preparation:

- If you did not cut the pink strips prior to this lesson you will have to do that.
- You will need to have visual writing supports available for students to see.

#### Anticipatory Set:

Reread your rough draft of your story aloud to students. Ask them if they think there is any way you could make it better, make it more exciting, see what sort of

discussion arises. You should hopefully see that students are noticing that you need more details to support your yellow strips

Pre-Assessment:

None

Teaching the Lesson:

Guided Practice

1. Let the students know they are exactly right; you do need more details to make your story more exciting.
2. Let them know that is exactly what you are going to do and they will be able to do that later.
3. Tell the students that you have an exciting topic sentence and that your first sentence isn't too bad either, but you need more.
4. Reread your first sentence again.
  - a. Warsaw loved living in the beautiful land called Gallatin and he was always kind to everyone he met.
5. Ask the students what they think you might need.
  - a. Move the conversation towards the fact that you need to explain Warsaw and his land more.
  - b. That you will do so with the use of pink strips.
    - i. These pinks help explain the yellows, giving reason, details, or facts to support them.
    - ii. They make the story or paragraph come alive!
6. Work out with the students another tasty ice cream sentence that you could use to describe Warsaw.
7. After some discussion you might come up with, write it on the white board:
  - a. Warsaw loved to bake cookies for his friends and since he was a dragon he always used his fire breath to cook them.
8. Have the students help you come up with another sentence, it could be:
  - a. Also, Warsaw loved going swimming in the clear blue lakes of Gallatin, in fact it was his favorite thing to do.
  - b. This may also be a good time to introduce transition words, such as also, next, last, etc. (see attached sheet)
  - c. Explain to students that as a class you will visit this again when editing their stories but it is good to know what words help our sentences connect better.
9. Take out the pink strips and rewrite your sentences from the board onto the slips.
10. Then put all your sentences so far in order.
11. Reread your sentences in order again.
12. Ask the students if you need to add anything else.
13. If not, glue your sentences to your notebook paper.
14. Let the students know that they will continue working on drafting their own stories today but they are now using pinks.



- a. Inform students they may use up to 3 pink strips for each one of their yellow strips.

Independent Practice:

1. Have the students pull out their stories again.
2. Have them reread what they already have.
3. Tell the students that you want them to write their sentences on handwriting paper first.
  - a. Tell them that spelling does not matter as of yet but to still try their best.
4. When they feel they are ready for a pink have them raise their hands.
  - a. Read their sentence to make sure it goes with their yellow sentence.
  - b. If it does, give them a pink slip.
5. Continue to walk around the classroom and assisting students as they need it.
6. Make sure to check each student's work before letting them transfer their sentence to a yellow strip.
7. Once they have finished writing what they feel is enough pink slips for each yellow they already have, have them raise their hand for you to check their sentences.
  - a. If it looks good have them glue their strips down and move onto the next yellow and the pink strips that follow that yellow.
8. When they are completely finished they may put them away.

Closure:

It students do not finish the first day; let them know that they will finish up drafting their stories the next day. Check in with students on how they feel about their stories thus far. Have them give you a thumbs up if they feel good, thumbs sideways if they feel so-so, and a thumbs down if it is not going well. If you have students with a thumbs down make sure to check in with those students to see what they are struggling with.

Accommodations:

If you have a student who is a struggling writer they may dictate their sentence to you while you write it on a white board and they can transfer the sentence onto a pink strip from there. If they are struggling to think of a sentence have them draw it out first.

Anything can be adjusted or modified for whatever suits your students the best.

Assessment/Evaluation:

If you have students who are moving rapidly and finished the first day but the rest of the class is moving rather slowly, you may need to have on hand some enrichment activities on hand for those students to do. You will want to teach all students the major concepts together. If students are willing to help others think of words or ways to write a sentence, they may be student helpers to other in the classroom.

Lesson 10  
Conclusion and Self Edit

Duration:

35-40 minutes

Objective:

Students will be able to write a conclusion sentence for their fairy tales.

Transition:

Students will need to get out their fairy tale folders and be ready for the lesson.

Standards:

Reading/Writing:

Standard 1: Students read and understand a variety of materials.

Standard 4: Students apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.

Daily Materials:

- Fairy tale folders
- Glue
- Green strips for conclusion
- High frequency words

Anticipatory set (2 minutes):

Read the conclusion of your fairy tale to your students.

Pre-Assessment:

None

Teaching the Lesson (10 minutes):

1. Ask the students what they noticed about the conclusion of your fairy tale.
2. Write down on the white board some of the things they noticed.
3. Tell students that the point of a conclusion is to end the story and to leave nothing left for readers to wonder about.
4. Let students know that with a fairy tale it is customary for them to end with “and they lived happily ever after”.

Independent Practice (5-10 minutes):

1. Pass out a green strip to each student and have him or her write their own conclusion for their story.
  - b. Make sure that the students show you their conclusion prior to gluing it onto their notebook paper.
2. Once students have finished writing their conclusions have them gather around the white board on the floor.

Guided Practice (10 minutes):

1. Write on the board various sentences misspelling different high frequency words within those sentences, such as:
  - a. Warsaw lovd to pla with hiz best frind Sadie.
  - b. He waz always a happe dragon who lafted a lot.
2. Have the students help you correcting the words that you spelled wrong.
  - c. Make sure to have the high frequency word cards cut apart and handy for children to look through if they are not sure how to spell the word correctly but know that it is wrong.
3. Make all the necessary corrections to the sentences.

Independent Practice (10-15 minutes)

1. Pass out high frequency cards to each student
2. Have each student go through their story looking for the words that they think they may have spelled wrong.
3. Have them use the high frequency cards to correct any misspelled words they find.
  - a. They may not find all of them. This is quite all right because students will edit with a partner next time to find any further mistakes.
4. Make sure to walk around the classroom assisting students as they need it.
5. Once students feel they have corrected all they can find have them put their rough drafts and high frequency cards in their fairy tale folders.

Closure:

Have the students put their fairy tale folders away. Let them know that next time they will recheck their rough drafts with a partner to look for any other corrections that need to be made. Let them know they will be entering the editing stage and to be ready to make their stories even better than they already are.

Accommodations:

You may need to assist students in discovering misspelled words within their writing. It may be difficult for some students to know which words they have spelled wrong. If a student is struggling finding a high frequency word card you may need to assist them with this as well.

Assessment/Evaluation:

This lesson will help you to see which students are actively looking at their own writing. It will also help you to see which students are struggling spellers of high frequency words, which are the building blocks to reading and writing. This will assist you in coming up with other ways to help those students.

Lesson 11  
Peer Editing

Duration: 40-50 minutes

Objective:

Students will be revising and editing their writing with the assistance of a partner.

Transition:

Have the students get out their fairy tale folders and get ready for revising

Standards:

Reading/Writing:

Standard 1: Students read and understand a variety of materials.

Standard 3: Students write and speak using conventional grammar usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

Standard 4: Students apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.

Daily Materials:

- Rough draft of fairy tale story
- Peer editing sheet (Appendix)
- Transparency of peer editing sheet (Appendix)
- Transparency of teacher rough draft (Appendix)
- Red vis-à-vis marker
- Red correcting pen
- High frequency word cards

Anticipatory set (5 minutes):

Have the students gather around the Once Upon a Time bulletin board. Move the crown to the editing spot and tell the students that today they will be helping each other to make their stories better. They will help one another look for misspelled words and sentences that do not make any sense.

Pre-Assessment:

None

Teaching the Lesson:

1. Have the students go back to their desks.
2. Tell the students that you are going to break them up into pairs for peer editing.
3. Tell them that before you break them up into groups you want to show them what they are going to do first.

Guided Practice (10 minutes):

1. Put the transparency of the peer-editing sheet on the overhead.
2. Choose a student to work with you.
3. Have the student you chose read the first paragraph of your rough draft

- c. Make sure you choose a student who is a relatively strong reader.
  - d. Make sure that your rough draft has spelling errors, missing periods and capitals, etc.
- 4. Once the student has read the paragraph have them, with the assistance of the rest of the class, figure out the errors in your paragraph.
  - e. Show them that they can use the high frequency spelling cards to help them with spelling.
- 5. Use the red transparency pen to show how students will mark on their partner's paper.

Independent Practice (20-25 minutes):

- 1. Tell the students who their partners are.
  - d. You may want to partner strong writers with weaker ones
- 2. Have the students move around and find a spot to sit that is next to their partner.
- 3. Tell the students that you want them to read their partners story before they make any changes or suggestions.
- 4. Once they have read the story, tell students that they will use the peer-editing sheet to help them make suggestions for their partner.
  - e. Pass out the peer editing sheet
- 5. Tell the students that they may now get started on helping each other improve their story.
- 6. Make sure to walk around the room assisting students and monitoring students understanding and progress with peer editing.

Closure:

Once students have assisted each other in making changes have them put their stories away and gather around the Once Upon a Time bulletin board. Have a quick discussion about how the peer editing went, what was good about it, what was hard, what helped, what didn't, and ask the students what they learned about working with someone else to improve their stories. Let students know that tomorrow you will be rereading their stories to look for any further ways to help improve their stories.

Accommodations:

Some students may need more assistance in reading their partners stories than others. If you have a parent volunteer or a paraprofessional they can assist you in this, helping to lighten the load. There may be other accommodations needed depending upon your student demographics.

Assessment/Evaluation:

The closure discussion will be a quick teacher check in/evaluation to see how students understood and dealt with peer editing. You may also want to take notes while assisting students around the room.

Lesson 12  
Writers Conference  
With a Teacher

Duration:

40-50 minutes (depending on your time restraints this lesson may take up to two days).

Objective:

Students will be sharing partner-edited work with a teacher. Students will be expected to self evaluate their work while sharing with a teacher.

Transition:

This lesson is designed to be a teacher follow up with students after they have completed partner editing. Students should have their fairy tale folders out and be ready to share their written work.

Standards:

Reading/Writing:

Standard 1: Students read and understand a variety of materials.

Standard 2: Students write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Standard 4: Students apply their thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.

Daily Materials:

- Fairy Tale Folders
- Student fairy tales
- Pencils
- Self evaluation sheet (Appendix)
- Teacher check list (Appendix)
- Parent invite to authors tea (Appendix)

Pre-Preparation:

- You will need to photocopy the necessary amounts of both the self-evaluation sheet and teacher checklist.

Anticipatory Set:

Students may continue to put the finishing touches on their written fairy tales. Have the students gather around the Once Upon a Time bulletin board. Move the crown to the writing conference spot. Tell students that today they will be meeting with you to read their story to you and make sure it is ready to rewrite/publish. Congratulate them on coming this far, letting them know they are so close to being ready for their authors tea!

Teaching the Lesson:

1. Have the students go back to their desks.
2. Explain to the students that if they are not finished checking their work with a buddy they need to finish that first.
3. If they are finished checking their work, they may go to the writing center area and pick up a parent invitation to color and fill out to remind parents of the upcoming authors tea (show them where this is).
4. Be sure to have sent a letter home at the beginning of the unit in order to prepare parents for the conclusion of the unit. The invitations will be a reminder to parents that the celebration of their child's work is approaching.
  - a. Depending on when you sent out a parent note asking for donations to the author's tea, you may also need to send a reminder note for the items you may still need.
5. Tell the students you will call them back individually to read their story to you while they are working.

Guided Practice: (Meet with students for only 5-7 minutes each)

1. Call students over one at a time.
2. Ask for them to bring their story and their buddy-editing sheet.
3. Have the student read their story to you.
4. Have the student show you the corrections they made with a partner.
5. Fill in your teacher checklist.
6. Walk the students through each of the things you are marking on the checklist so they understand what they are being graded on.
7. Have a pad of sticky notes handy in case you need to write down a reminder for a student to add something to their story.
8. Make any further suggestions or corrections that need to be done to a student's story.
9. Then go over the self-evaluation with the student.
10. Have the student fill in the evaluation with you assisting them in the process.
11. Let students know that you will look at your checklist, their self-evaluation, and their final published copy of their story to give them their final grade.
12. Have the student go back to their desk.
13. If the student had further corrections to be made, they will do that independently.
14. When they have finished making their corrections again, have them write their name on the board so that you know you need to conference with that student again before they start publishing.
15. You may work out when you meet with this student again when it fits your schedule the best.
16. If a student does not need to make any further corrections have them put their fairy tale in their fairy tale folder and go work on their parent invitation.

Closure:

When you have finished meeting with students have them put away their folders. Touch base with students on what they have learned so far about being a

professional writer. Compliment them on their hard work thus far and be encouraging and excited about their publishing and upcoming author's tea.

**Accommodations:**

You will be meeting individually with each student so you can make appropriate accommodations then.

**Assessment/Evaluation:**

The assessment portion of a writer's conference will be the self-evaluation, teacher checklist and the peer-editing sheet from the previous lesson.

This lesson is time demanding and may seem hard to manage but it is vital for you as a teacher to meet with each child to make sure they are ready to publish as well as to provide the individual attention each child needs as a writer.



## Lesson 13

### Rewriting/Publishing

Duration:

40-50 minutes

Objective:

Students will be able to rewrite and publish their fairy tales.

Transition:

Students should get out their fairy tale folders and be ready and excited to publish their hard work!

Standards:

Reading/Writing:

Standard 1: Students read and understand a variety of materials.

Standard 2: Students write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Standard 4: Students apply their thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.

Daily Materials:

- Fairy Tale Folders
- Rough draft of fairy tales
- Handwriting paper
- Pencils
- Construction paper
- Scrap booking scissors
- Markers
- Crayons
- Colored pencils
- Glue
- Jewels
- Stickers
- Foam shapes
- Card Stock
- Staplers
- Yarn/Ribbon
- Colored paper
- Paper for illustrations
- Magnifying Glasses

Pre-Preparation:

- You will need to have all the above supplies set out and ready to use.

- It would be best if you have an area in your classroom that is designated for writing, including a table and some cubbies, in order to store all these materials.
- You will also need to make sure you have photocopied the illustration page for students.

#### Anticipatory Set:

Have the students stand up and take a bow to one another. Have them go around the room and congratulate one another for working so hard on writing their stories. Pull the children back together and tell them that today is the day that all authors look forward to, the publishing stage. Move the crown on the bulletin board to the publishing spot.

#### Teaching the Lesson:

1. Have the students go back to their desks.
2. Tell them that the first step in publishing their stories is to rewrite them in their best handwriting.
3. Pass out the handwriting paper you have set aside for publishing.
4. Tell the students they must rewrite their stories first.
5. When they are finished rewriting they need to create at least one illustration to go with their story.
  - b. They may have more than one if they like.
6. When they have finished rewriting their story and illustrating it, they may then make the cover for it.
7. Tell them to use whatever they wish to use from the writing center to make their illustrations and cover of their book amazing!!
8. Walk around the room assisting students in putting their books together.
  - c. Allow them whatever creativity they wish to use when putting the book together.
9. This may take some time for students to do but it will be so fun to watch them put together their final version of their stories.
10. When they are completely finished have them read their stories to one another.

#### Closure:

Once every child has put together their book have them join you around the Once Upon a Time bulletin board. Move the crown from publishing to the castle at the end. Have everyone give everyone else a round of applause for working so hard and for doing such an amazing job! Tell the students that tomorrow (or the next day, however it works out for you), they will be presenting their stories to their parents as official authors! They should feel so proud!

#### Accommodations:

There are no specific accommodations, only those that you feel are need for individual students.

Assessment/Evaluation:

None

You may want to set up a time with a buddy class for your students to share their fairy tales with their buddy class. This would provide the students another arena to show off their hard work and further enforce their personal value to their hard work. It will also give those students whose parents may not be able to come to the authors tea, someone they know to whom they can present their fairy tales to.

Lesson 14  
Authors Tea/Presentation

Duration: one hour

Objective:

Student will be able to present their finished fairy tale stories to parents, guardians, and friends of the student.

Transition:

You should have the afternoon set aside for the presentations of students' fairy tales. It may be best to have the authors' tea a half hour to an hour after lunch, allowing a half hour at the end of the day to discuss with your students how the even went.

Standards:

Daily Materials:

- Students' published fairy tales
- Author's chair
- Tea
- Juice
- Snack items (cookies, crackers, etc.)
- Dixie cups
- Napkins
- Parent Evaluation sheet (Appendix)
- Student Evaluation (Appendix)
- Grading Rubric (Appendix)
- Parent Note

Pre-Planning:

- Send out a parent letter a week prior to the author's tea in order to see who will attend and who will not attend.
- Send home a parent note (attached) asking for donations of snack and drink items for the authors tea.
- Make sure to let the front office know so that they can expect parents entering the school for this function within your classroom.

Pre-Assessment:

None

Teaching the Lesson:

1. Prior to the parents coming have the students help arrange the classroom.

2. You may want to move desks aside, have all the students' chairs in row for the audience (parents) and the students themselves sitting up front on the floor, as part of the audience when not reading their fairy tales.
3. Have an author's chair in the front of the room for students to sit in while they read their stories.
4. You may then introduce each student prior to them reading their fairy tale, in whatever order works best.
5. Have each child read their fairy tale and show their illustrations.
6. When they are finished they are to sit on the floor until every child has read.
7. When all children have read their stories have them go the front of the room for a final bow.
8. When you are finished, students and parents may get snacks and sit around the room.
9. Have the parents fill out their evaluation of the stories. Have them leave the evaluations with you prior to them leaving the classroom.
10. Students may share with their parents the parts of a fairy tale, what they did to complete their story as well as show them their fairy tale folder holding all their work.
11. When it is time for parents to leave thank them for coming and joining the class for the authors tea.

**Closure:**

Once all the parents have left, have the children assist you in putting the classroom back in order. Once this is finished have the students sit at their desks. Tell them that you would like them to fill out an evaluation on how they did on their stories. Let them know this will help you when you give a final grade on their project. You may want to let the students know that they did a wonderful job during the writing unit and during the authors tea. You may also want to allow time for discussion on how they felt the authors tea went.

**Accommodations:**

If you have any ELL students you will want your ELL teacher to communicate with the families about the tea and also have him or her assist you in making Spanish versions of their child's story, invitations, parent notes home, evaluations, etc. It may even be good to have a translator at the author's tea if the parents do not speak English.

**Assessment/Evaluation:**

Use the attached rubric in grading students overall success and progress throughout the unit. Also take into consideration the students' own evaluation on how they felt they did.

This may be a project that you may want to share with your team or even the rest of your school if it was successful for you and your students.

## Chapter Summary

In this author's opinion the created writing unit sufficiently addresses the concerns and needs of an educator, teaching primary aged students how and what to write. It incorporates a variety of learning styles. This unit ties together various schools of thought into easy to read and follow lessons. As a whole the unit enables educators of all levels to continue to reinforce the importance of connecting literature with writing not only for students but also for themselves

## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION

During this author's five years in the Poudre School District it was observed that there was a lack of any structured writing curriculum provided for educators. There are, of course state standards educators must adhere to but no structured format to follow as to how to best instruct children on how to write. As a paraprofessional and then as a classroom educator the paucity of a writing curriculum made it difficult and at times exhaustive to effectively teach students the skills of writing. Student test scores from the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) reflected the lack of skills and a desperate need for more structured, successful writing curriculums for students. Curriculums focused on instructing students on how to write through various steps, providing opportunities for them to write often, and keeping writing in the perspective of children, all starting as early as Kindergarten. With state writing standards already in place and personal experiences with struggling writers, it became clear what this author needed to do in order to better enhance her writing instruction. Thus, the lack of curriculum led to the formation of this project.

The purpose of this project was to design and develop a thematic unit using fairy tales to improve student success in writing in the first grade. The intent of this unit was to help ease the difficulties educators face when teaching students how to write without any set curriculum. The lessons within the unit incorporate literature and various writing schools of thought. Each lesson was written based on state standards, structure, and

creativity. Alongside of this, each lesson put into practice multiple intelligences and higher level thinking. The unit focused on children, relating stories and ideas they are familiar with. It allows for time and mistakes to be made by children so as to better learn how to write. Finally, it incorporates student ownership in the writing process and in the completion of a culminating presentation. This project is meant to excite educators and students in the process of writing; correlating it with the importance of text, focusing literature and writing, to go hand in hand for real world application for students.

This project was presented to fellow colleagues for evaluation, approval, and overall application within a classroom, whether it is applied within a standard classroom, special education classroom or Title One classroom. This author greatly encouraged her colleagues to contribute to the improvement of this project with the hopes that their combined 60 year expertise would assist in making this project applicable in its format to almost any classroom.

#### Strengths of the Project

Evaluation by this author's colleagues was very valuable. The following comments reflect what these evaluators felt were the strengths of the project.

1. The project did a nice job connecting standards to the overall process of writing.
2. This project is something they would use within their classroom.
3. The project is laid out well enough to constructively assist new teachers in educating students on how to write.
4. It involved the various learning styles of all students which will help to meet the various needs of a classroom.



5. The celebration and bulletin board will help to keep students excited and involved with the project for its entire duration.
6. The celebration helps to tie parental involvement with the project, making the home to school connection.

### Limitations of the Project

This author's evaluators felt there were not any major limitations to this project. Their overall opinion was that the project was well laid out. However, they did point out that this project may be difficult to teach to students who are beginning writers. An option to elevate this limitation could be to minimize the amount of steps a student needs to do in order to reach a final product. Another option could be to pull in those areas of weakness for a student into another teaching area, such as guided reading groups. Students struggling with vocabulary, phonetic structures or sentence formation could be given slower more detailed assistance in the completion of the lessons. Overall, the only way to truly know the successes and weakness of this unit is to jump in and give it a try. As stated by the evaluators, each class is different as well as each child, thus, the overall flow of the unit will depend upon this. However, on the whole this unit requires educators to spend time getting to know each of their students, so, it will work best either during the second half of the year or three months into the year. This time frame may not work well with some curriculums set up by educators, it best serves the standards in which one must teach and adhere to. Although there may be limitations to the project, its multi-sensory, structured, standard based nature, as stated by the evaluators, will work with Title One and special education students, it just may take more time and a slower pace.

### Recommendations for Further Research

Upon reflecting on this unit it would be wise to state areas in which it could be improved so as to better suit the needs of the students. One area in which this project could be improved is student and parent buy in. It is important for the students to be excited about the author's tea from the beginning and to continue to maintain their excitement throughout the duration of the unit. It is equally important for parents to be aware of the author's tea from the beginning; this will allow for parents to make any necessary work accommodations that may need to be done in order for them to come and listen to their child read their story. Alongside of this up front information it would be wise to keep parents informed during the entire unit. This can be done through weekly newsletters notifying parents of student achievements, skills learned, and timelines for when the project will reach final completion.

If this unit is to be used in an intermediate grade, it would be useful to adapt each lesson to fit the dynamics of an older classroom. This can be done by incorporating more fairy tales, more in depth concepts and even a country to country comparison of traditional fairy tales, such as the various Cinderella stories between varying countries. One could also have students spend more time focusing on the 6 Traits in more detail so as to apply them better within their writing. Finally, the whole unit could be student led. Students could determine which fairy tales they would like to read and study about, what their rubrics would look like and even how their celebration would go. Overall it is important for an educator to get to know their classroom and the abilities of each child prior to teaching the unit.

## Project Summary

On the whole this project and its corresponding unit were successful. It was met with enthusiasm and respect. The evaluators felt the unit was well thought out and user friendly, not only for new educators but for veteran educators as well. The creativity and incorporation of multiple learning styles helps to make this unit successful for any student who participates. The end result of the unit is a piece of work, a source of pride for a student, and a memory for a lifetime. The unit will not only adhere to teaching state standards and the process of writing but will also give students an opportunity to own their education and to own the work. This is a reward within itself.

The strengths of this unit are evident as are the limitations and it is up to an educator to try it out and see what ultimately works best for his or her classroom. This project has room for growth and improvement. Making improvements will lend itself to further strengthening students in their writing skills and increasing the overall success of student achievement. This achievement will be evident in test scores, student involvement and overall increased understanding of literature. Students will hopefully be able to personally identify with authors, for they too are authors themselves.

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## APPENDIX

### Supporting Documents



## Royal Declaration

Here ye', Here ye', the township of \_\_\_\_\_ (enter your classroom name, room number, motto, etc.) is being formally invited to join the royal Once Upon a Time fairy tale adventure. You will be whisked away into the magical land of fairy tales. Each of you will learn about our treasured tales, how they are scribed (written), what makes them a treasured tale, and you yourselves will be creating a fairy tale masterpiece to add to our royal library. The King and Queen are so excited to have you create new fairy tales for their collection they are throwing a ball for all of us townsfolk. Good luck on your adventure into the land of fairy tales, I know you will all make the King and Queen proud!!!





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**What I am Interested In**

\_\_\_\_\_ I want to write about animals.

\_\_\_\_\_ I want to write about a dragon.

\_\_\_\_\_ I want to write about princes, princesses, kings, and queens.

**Something else I want to write about is:**

---

---

---

\_\_\_\_\_ I know a lot about fairy tales.

\_\_\_\_\_ I kind of know about fairy tales.

\_\_\_\_\_ I do not know that much about fairy tales.

-----



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**What I am Interested In**

\_\_\_\_\_ I want to write about animals.

\_\_\_\_\_ I want to write about a dragon.

\_\_\_\_\_ I want to write about princes, princesses, kings, and queens.

**Something else I want to write about is:**

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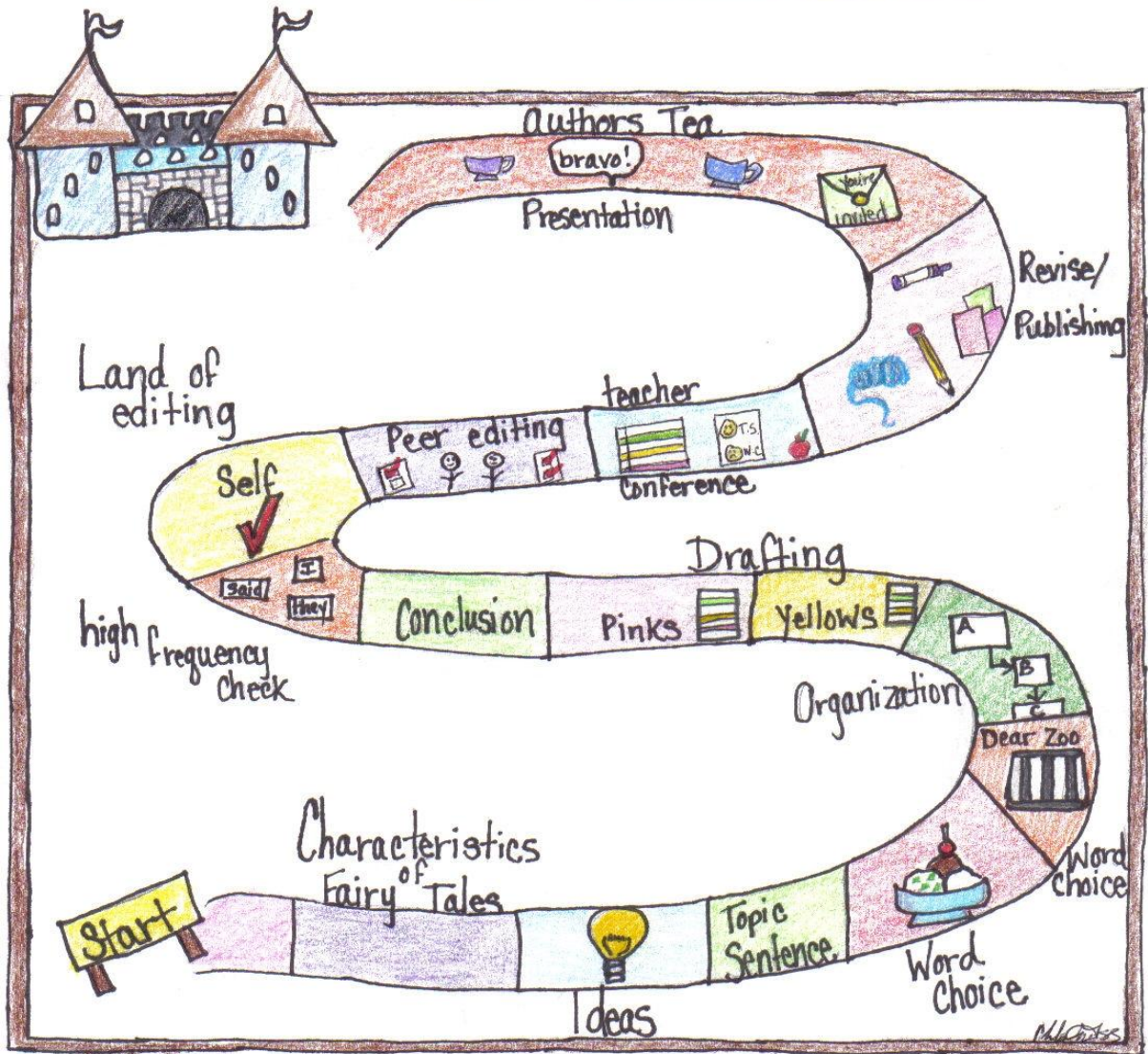
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\_\_\_\_\_ I know a lot about fairy tales.

\_\_\_\_\_ I kind of know about fairy tales.

\_\_\_\_\_ I do not know that much about fairy tales.

# Once Upon a Time bulletin board



*Date*

Dear Parents,

Our first grade class is starting a fairy tale unit that will last for the next three to four weeks. We will be writing fairy tales incorporating 6-Trait Writing, the Writing Process and Step Up to Writing. As part of this unit the students will be putting on an authors tea. During the authors tea students will be reading aloud the fairy tales they wrote. I am encouraging parents, if it works with their schedules, to attend this event. We will be holding the authors' tea during the last hour of school, on the final day of our unit, scheduled for *DATE*. So, if you can make it, please attend!

After all students have read their fairy tales they will be discussing how they wrote them with their parents. This is an important part of the writing process, which helps to give students a sense of pride and ownership of their work. During this sharing time we will also be having snacks and a drink. I am asking for parent donations for both snacks and drinks.

If you can attend the tea please fill out the RSVP slip below.

If you would like to donate items for the tea fill the sheet below as well.

Please turn in the RSVP and donation sheets back to me by the beginning of next week.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me via phone, email or note.

Sincerely,

*Your Name*

---

\_\_\_\_\_ **Yes** I will be attending the Authors' tea.

\_\_\_\_\_ **No** I will be unable to attend the Authors' tea.

---

I would like to donate one of the following items, to be sent with my child on the day of the Authors' tea.

_____ Bottle of Juice	_____ Cookies	_____ A baked good	_____ Plates
_____ Pretzels	_____ Snack Mix	_____ Cups	_____ Napkin

## Sample Idea Paragraphs

### Paragraph one:

I think that swimming in a lake is great! I live near a lake and everyday in the summer I go swimming. My favorite thing about swimming is diving. My next favorite thing about swimming is the back float. I can lie on my back in the water all day and stare at the clouds. I learned how to swim when I was in preschool. I took lessons at the neighborhood pool. I know how to do the front stroke, the back crawl, and the frog. At the lake we have a giant trampoline in the water, we jump as high as we can and then make cannon balls. Whoever makes the biggest splash wins. If I didn't live near a lake I would be sad. Swimming is one of my favorite things to do and that is why I think swimming is great!

### Paragraph two:

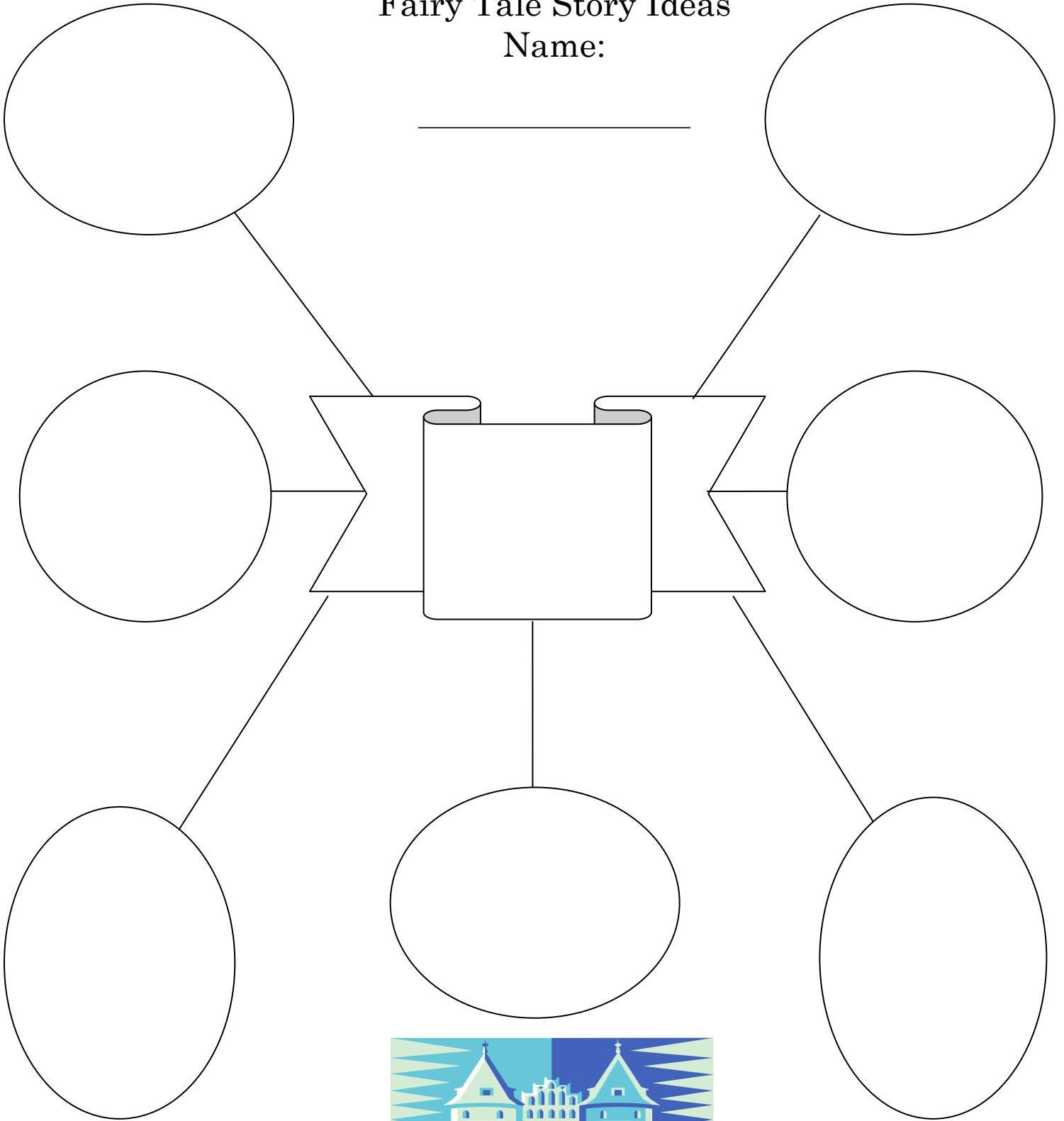
They are slimy and green, not very tasty and make me feel mean. If my mom puts them in my meal I think I will scream. You got it, that's right, I hate onions. They are smelly and foul and no one should eat them. If onions were outlawed I would shout for joy and throw a party. If you ever try to feed me one, just you wait; I will take one smell, one look, and possibly faint because I absolutely hate onions.

### Paragraph three:




I took a trip with my mom today. We went down to the local shoe store. Shoes are a curious thing; you have to wear them without any choice. The shoe store was amazing. I could smell the new shoes the moment I walked through the door. The whole store was brightly painted and there were rows and rows of shoes. There were white shoes, black shoes, pink shoes, girls and boys shoes, boots, dress shoes, slippers, and I even saw plaid shoes. The man who helped me find a pair of shoes was very kind. He answered all my questions and even let me try on 10 pairs of shoes, can you believe it! When it was finally time to buy my shoes I was happy with my choice, a plain pair of black shoes for all occasions. All in my entire trip to the shoe store was one to remember.





# Fairy Tale Story Ideas


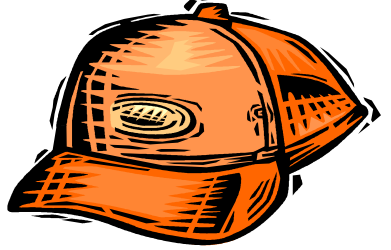


Name: \_\_\_\_\_



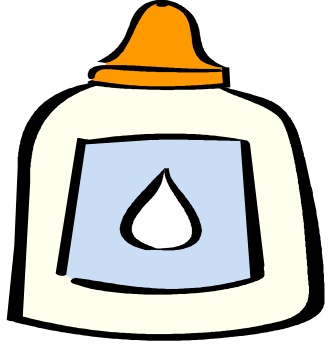
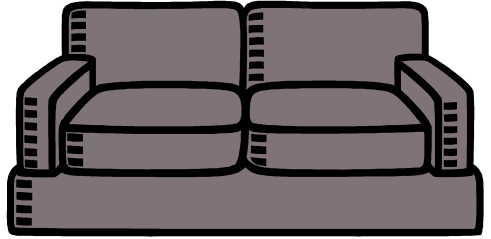
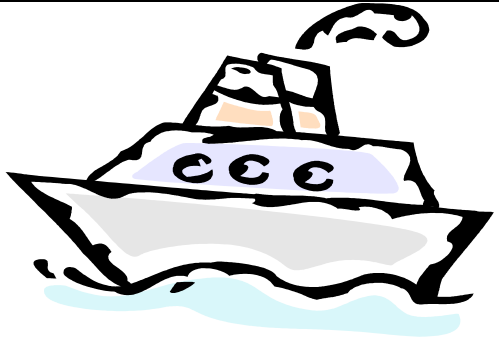
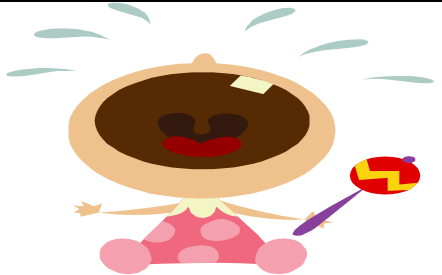
Synonym Cards



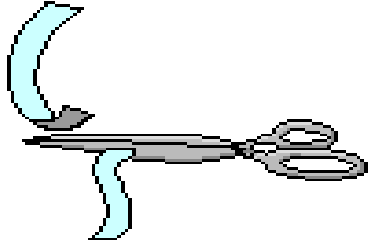
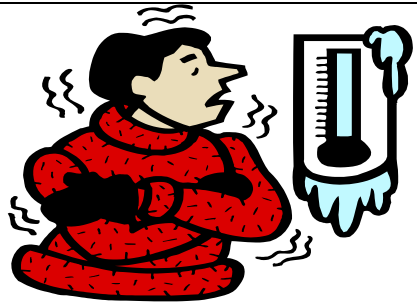
auto	car	
trash	garbage	
stop	cease	

leap	jump	
sack	bag	
bucket	pail	
shout	yell	

sick	ill	
cap	hat	
run	jog	
wet	damp	



glue	paste	
couch	sofa	
ship	boat	
cry	sob	

late	tardy	
drive	steer	
cut	clip	
cold	icy	

**Story Map**

<u>Characters</u>		<u>Setting</u>	
<u>Beginning</u>			
<u>Middle</u>			
<u>End</u>			

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Beginning, Middle, End**

**Beginning**

**Middle**

**End**

## Little Red Hen Pictures



## Sample Organization Paragraphs

### Sample one:

On Saturday I had a birthday party. I turned eight years old. I had many friends come to my party. I like having friends, it makes me feel special. I opened my presents and got the coolest things. I got a new baby doll and a toy castle for my Barbie's. I ate ice cream and cake but only after I blew out my candles. Did you know candles are made out of wax? I think bees make wax but I am not sure. After I opened my presents I played with my new toys. When we finished eating cake and ice cream we played pin the tail on the donkey. I had a really great birthday! I even was allowed to have a friend sleep over, it was exciting!

### Sample two:

My favorite thing about school is learning. Let me tell you why. First, I learn things I didn't know before, such as how much  $7 \times 6$  is and what types of food are better for you than others. Second, I get to work in groups with other students. Sometimes I get to explain to other students how to solve the math problem and it helps me to better understand what I am learning. Third, I know that the more I learn the more I know and my mother always tells me that the more I know the further I can go in life. This is exciting to me because I want to be a doctor. All in all, learning is wonderful and it is my favorite thing about school.

## Peer Editing Sheet

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Partner's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Revision	Yes ☺	No ☹
<b>Beginning</b>		
Does the story start like a fairy tale?		
It is a fun beginning?		
<b>Middle</b>		
Does the story have a hero?		
Is there a villain (bad guy)?		
Are there things happening in 3's?		
<b>Ending</b>		
Does the story end "Happily Ever After?"		
Is the story interesting?		
<b>Proofreading</b>	Yes ☺	No ☹
Are all words spelled correctly?		
Do all sentences begin with a capital letter and end with a period, question mark or exclamation point?		





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### My Fairy Tale Checklist (self evaluation)

#### **Beginning:**

**Yes**

**No**

☐
☐

**My story starts with “Once Upon a Time.”**

#### **Middle:**

**Yes**

**No**

☐
☐

**I have 3 events in my story.**

☐
☐

**I have a hero (prince, princess) in my story.**

☐
☐

**I have a villain (bad guy) in my story.**

#### **End:**

**Yes**

**No**

☐
☐

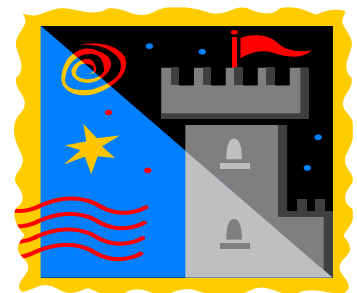
**My story ends “Happily Ever After/”**

☐
☐

**I like my story.**

☐
☐

**I worked hard on my story.**





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Fairy Tale Rubric

	Secure 3pts	Developing 2pts	Beginning 1pts
Topic Sentence	The beginning of the story is exciting and starts with "Once Upon a Time".	The beginning of the story is kind of exciting but is missing "Once Upon a Time".	The beginning of the story is missing excitement as well as "Once Upon a Time".
Events	The story contains at least 3 repeating events.	The story contains only 2 repeating events.	The story contains only 1 or no repeating events.
Ending	The story ends with "Happily Ever After".	The story ends with something similar to "Happily Ever After".	The story does not end with "Happily Ever After".
Conventions	All high frequency words are spelled correct.	Most high frequency words are spelled correct.	Little to no high frequency words are spelled correct.
Presentation	The story is written neatly, illustrated, and easy to read.	The story is written relatively neat, has few illustrations and is easy to read.	The story is written messy, has little to no illustrations, and is hard to read.

Comments:

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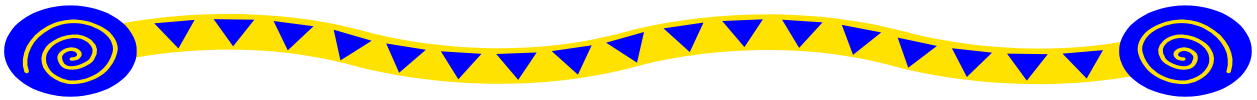
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Dear Parents,

Next Friday will be our Authors' tea for our fairy tales. I do hope you marked your calendars for this event. If you are donating items for the tea, please start sending the items in, starting on Monday. As planned we will start our authors' tea the last hour of the day, time. Your children are so very excited to share their hard work with you. We look forward to seeing you next Friday, *date*, for our celebration of a job well done.

Sincerely,

*Name*



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Fairy Tale  
Parent Evaluation

1. What did you like most about your child's fairy tale?

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2. Do you feel that your child captured the essence of what a fairy tale is?

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3. What part or parts would you like to see more of in your child's story?

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4. What did you learn about your child as a writer and perhaps even as a reader?

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